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EXDTS

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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O 172009Z JAN 79
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9119

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ SECTION 1 OF 2 BUENOS AIRES 0461

FOR ASST SECT VAKY

EXDTS

E.O. 12065 XDS-1 1-17-09 (CASTRO, RAUL H.) OR-M
TAGS SHUM, MNUC, PBOR, PINT, AR
SUBJECT AMBASSADOR'S MEETING WITH JUNTA MEMBER GENERAL VIOLA

REF: STATE 7868; STATE 10786

1. MY REQUESTED APPOINTMENT WITH GENERAL VIOLA WAS HELD IN HIS OFFICE YESTERDAY NOON (JAN 16). FOLLOWING TOPICS WERE DISCUSSED:

2. HOMBERG DEATH: I PRESENTED PRESIDENT CARTER AND USG CONDOLENCES TO GENERAL VIOLA, AS JUNTA PRESIDENT, OVER THE TRAGIC DEATH OF MS. HOLMBERG, GOA DIPLOMAT KIDNAPPED AND FOUND DEAD A FEW DAYS AGO. I TOLD VIOLA USG WAS SADDENED BY EVENT. HE THANKED ME AND SAID NO ROCK WOULD BE LEFT UNTURNED IN AN EFFORT TO FIND THE CULPRIT. VIOLA SAID NO CLEAR CLUES EXISTED BY, WITHOUT CLEARLY SPELLING IT OUT, SUGGESTED IT WAS A NAVY ACT. WITHOUT MENTIONING MASSERA'S NAME, BUT FULLY DESCRIBING HIM, STATED THEY HAD INFORMATION THIS PERSON WAS ATTEMPTING TO HAVE MEDIA PLACEMENTS IN US OF EMBARRASSING AND DEROGATORY NATURE TO GOA. SUGGESTION WAS MASSERA WOULD PAY THE TAB.

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3. MOTHERS OF PLAZA DE MAYO: I REMINDED VIOLA OF MY MEETING WITH HIM ON DEC 21 DISSUADING HIS GOVT NOT TO ARREST MOTHERS WHEN THEY TRADITIONALLY MET ON THURSDAY. HE SAID HE HAD ISSUED AN ORDER TO CANCEL ORDERS OF ARREST AND THAT MOTHERS WERE NOT MOLESTED. I THANKED HIM FOR HIS ACT. I THEN TOLD HIM THESE SAME MOTHERS ARE BEING PUSHED AROUND AND PROHIBITED FROM THE USE OF PLAZA DE MAYO FOR THEIR WEEKLY MEETINGS. VIOLA TOLD ME HIS INFORMATION WAS MININT HARGUINDEGUY WAS HANDLING THE MOTHERS IN A DIGNIFIED MANNER. I TOLD HIM PREVENTING MOTHERS FROM PEACEFULLY ASSEMBLING TO INQUIRE ABOUT FATE OF THEIR CHILDREN WAS NOT DIGNIFIED NOR WOULD IT HELP ARGENTINA'S IMAGE ABROAD, MUCH LESS AT HOME. HE WAS TAKING COPIOUS NOTES AS I WAS TALKING AND SAID HE WOULD DISCUSS MATTER WITH PRESIDENT VIDELA. I TOLD VIOLA MOTHERS MET WITH ME FROM TIME TO TIME AT EMBASSY AND I FIND THEM TO BE DEDICATED AND LOYAL MOTHERS. I TOLD HIM I DIDN'T FEEL THOSE MOTHERS OFFERED ANY SECURITY THREAT TO GOA. TO THE CONTRARY, I SUGGESTED TO VIOLA TIME HAD COME TO THINK OF SOME ANSWERS FOR THESE MOTHERS, WHO ONLY SEEK KNOWLEDGE OF WHEREABOUTS OF THEIR DISAPPEARED CHILDREN.

4. DISAPPEARANCES: I TOLD VIOLA USG WAS DEEPLY CONCERNED WITH CONTINUED DISAPPEARANCES. I TOLD HIM OUR RECORDS

~~Department of State, A/GIS/IPS/SRP~~
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Declassify after _____
With concurrence of: _____
IPS by obtained _____ not obt. _____
Date 12-5-10

Declassified Case: 17W- 37067 Date: 06-05-2013

INDICATED AN AVERAGE OF ABOUT 55 MONTHLY DISAPPEARANCES STILL TAKING PLACE. HE RAISED HIS VOICE AND SAID "HOW MANY?". I THEN REPEATED THE FIGURE OF 55. VIOLA SAID HE COULDN'T BELIEVE THIS WAS POSSIBLE. I TOLD HIM IT WAS INEXCUSABLE TO HAVE THESE DISAPPEARANCES INASMUCH AS THE "DIRTY WAR" WAS OVER. I TOLD HIM ON MY ARRIVAL IN ARGENTINA JUSTIFICATION GIVEN FOR DISAPPEARANCES WAS "DIRTY" AGAINST SUBVERSIVES. I REFRESHED HIS MEMORY OF VIDELA'S AND HIS OWN SPEECHES GIVING INDICATION WAR HAD BEEN WON AGAINST TERRORISM. IT WAS HERE WHEN HE AGAIN TOLD ME HE

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LACKED A POWER BASE, BUT IF THINGS WORKED OUT WELL HE WOULD BE OPERATING FROM STRENGTH AND THESE THINGS WOULDN'T HAPPEN. (I THINK I KNOW THE PLAYERS OF THE GOA TEAM AND CERTAINLY FEEL I KNOW VIOLA QUITE WELL. WE BOTH SPEAK WITH CANDOR TO EACH OTHER.) IN VIEW OF THIS PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP, I TOLD VIOLA I COULDN'T QUITE UNDERSTAND HOW HE AS PRESIDENT OF THE JUNTA, ARMY COMMANDER, AND VIDELA AS PRESIDENT OF THE NATION FELT POWERLESS TO ACT. I SAID ARGENTINA'S GOVERNING POWER IS WITH THE ARMY AND HE WAS MR. ARMY. I SUGGESTED PERHAPS HIS WILLINGNESS TO WORK ON A CONSENSUS BASIS WAS BEING MISINTERPRETED AS A SIGN OF WASKNESS.

I SAID I KNEW I WAS STEPPING INTO A GREY AREA, BUT I FELT IT WAS UP TO GOA TO PUT THEIR ACTO TOGETHER BEFORE USG COULD BE OF ASSISTANCE. HE ACCEPTED MY COMMENTS IN THE SPRIT IN WHICH THEY WERE INTENDED AND SAID HE STILL FELT HE PULLED THE CHESTNUTS OUT OF THE IFRE. HE WANTED UNDERSTANDING FROM USG. I ASSURED HIM HE HAD IT.

5. SUSANA PANERO: I INQUIRED ONCE AGAIN ABOUT THE STAU OF SUANA PANERO, A CASE I HAVE RAISED WITH HIM AT ALMOST EVERY MEETING. VIOLA'S IMMEDIATE REACTION WAS "ISN'T SHE OUT?". I REPLIED NEGATIVE AND I AM STILL AWAITING HER RELEASE. IN A STRONG TONE VIOLA POUNDED THE DESK AND SAID I GUARANTEE YOU HER RELEASE. IN INQUIRED "WHEN" AND HE SAID "VERY SOON".

6. JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES: I TOLD VIOLA THERE ARE TWO SUBJECTS WHICH ALWAYS LEAD TO EMOTIONAL OUTBURSTS, RELIGION AND POLITICS. I TOLD HIM MY TOPIC WAS RELIGION-JHOVAH'S WITNESSES. I TOLD HIM IT WAS BAD ENOUGH TO HAVE ARGENTINA DEPICTED AS A HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATOR, BUT NOW THE THIRD DIMENSION WAS BEING ADDED OF BEING A COUNTRY OF RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE. I EXPLAINED TO HIM THE AMERICAN CONGRESS, USG AND THE AMERICAN PEOPLE ARE APPALLED AT GOA'S HOSTILE ATTITUDE TOWARDS JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES. VIOLA STATED IT WAS DIFFICULT FOR HIM TO PENETRATE MILITARY MINDS FOR SYMPATHETIC UNDERSTANDING TOWARDS WITNESSES

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WHEN THEIR CHILDREN REFUSED TO SALUTE THE FLAG AND SING THE NATIONAL ANTHEM IN SCHOOL. HE SAID REFUSAL TO SERVE IN THE ARMED FORCES ADDED TO THE DILEMMA. I TOLD VIOLA MUCH OF

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Declassified Case: 17X-8706 Date: 06-05-2013

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
 -----109353 172115Z /62
 O 172009Z JAN 79
 FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
 TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9120

~~C O N F I D E N T I A L~~ SECTION 2 OF 2 BUENOS AIRES 0461

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FOR ASST SECT VAKY

THE LAW MADE IN THE UNITED STATES, AS INTERPRETED BY THE COURTS, WAS DUE TO JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES CASES. I TOLD HIM IN MY LAW SCHOOL DAYS COURT CALENDARS WERE JAMMED WITH SALUTE FLAG REFUSAL AND NATIONAL ANTHEM NON-SINGING CASES. AS A RESULT OF GOOD SOLUTIONS WERE FOUND BY THE COURTS. I TOLD VIOLA GOA WAS UNDERGOING AND MAKING SAME MISTAKES WE (US) MADE MAY YEARS AGO WITH JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES. I FELT GOA COULD LEARN FROM OUR MISTAKES. VIOLA SAID HE CONSIDERED THE MATTER TO BE MOST SERIOUS. HE SAID "I CONSIDER THE WITNESSES VERY GOOD PEOPLE AND DO MAKE A CONTRIBUTION IN EVERY COUNTRY THEY ARE IN". HE CONCLUDED THIS SUBJECT BY STATING "IT'S HARD TO CONVINCING MILITARY BLOCK HEADS". HE SAID HE WOULD BE TAKING THE MATTER UP WITH VIDELA.

7. JAIME LOKMAN: I MENTIONED JAIME LOKMAN WAS ANOTHER HIGH INTERST CASE FOR US. VIOLA INDICATED HE HAD VAGUELY HEARD OF THE CASE BUT LACKED DETAILS. HE SAID HE KNEW IT WAS ONE OF GENERAL MENENDEZ' CASES IN CORDOBA. I TOLD HIM LOKMAN HAD BEEN TRANSFERRED TO ANOTHER PRISON FROM CORDOBA TO GET HIM OUT OF MENENDEZ' CLUTCHES. VIOLA PROMISED TO TAKE UP THE CASE WITH HARGUINDEGUY AND VIDELA AT THE EARLIEST MOMENT.

8. VAKY VISIT: IN THE LIGHT OF STATE 10786, I EXPLORED
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VIOLA'S VIEWS ON A POSSIBLE VAKY VISIT. HE SAID HE WELCOMED ASST SECT VAKY'S VISIT AT THE RIGHT TIME. I INQUIRED WHEN WAS THE RIGHT TIME IN HIS OPINION. HE STATED ASST SECT VAKY SHOULD NOT VISIT ARGENTINA PRIOR TO MARCH 15. I ASKED HIM WHAT WAS MAGIC ABOUT MARCH 15. VIOLA REPLIED BY THAT DATE SOME WORD WOULD HAVE BEEN RECEIVED FROM THE POPE ON THE BEAGLE DISPUTE. HE ALSO SAID HE EXPECTED BY THAT DATE HIS INTERNAL PROBLEMS WOULD BE RESOLVED, ONE WAY OR THE OTHER. I TOLD HIM I HAD READ IN THE PRESS OF GENERAL SUAREZ MASON'S POSSIBLE APPOINTMENT AS CHIEF OF STAFF. HE SAID IT IS TRUE IT WAS BEING CONSIDERED BY NOT FINAL. HE SAID THERE WERE STILL A FEW 'SIFS" TO RESOLVE. HE STATED ALL MILITARY ASSIGNMENTS WOULD BE MADE WITHIN EIGHT DAYS.

9. POPE'S MEDIATION: VIOLA SAID HE WAS DISAPPOINTED WITH THE POPE'S PROGRESS ON THE BEAGLE CHANLE MATTER. HE SAID HE HAD EXPECTED THE POPE TO ACCEPT OR REFUSE MEDIATION WITHIN ONE WEEK AFTER CARDINAL SAMORE'S RETURN TO ROME. HE SAID THE DELAY WAS PLACING HIM IN A TIGHT SITUATION. VIOLA SAID HE IS ANXIOUS TO WITHDRAW TROOPS, BUT CANT DO IT UNTIL GOA HEARS FROM THE POPE. MAINTAINING THE TROOPS ON AN ALERT BASIS IS A PROBLEM SOLDIERS ARE GETTING IMPATIENT. AND DISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS MAY ARISE. HE EMPHASIZED SOME OF HIS HARD-LINE EFFORTS PLUS BROADCASTING ARGENTINA WAS TRICKED INTO AN IMPOSSIBLE SITUATION.

10. TLATELOLCO: THE PERENNIAL SUBJECT OF RATIFICATION OF TLATELOLCO WAS AGAIN RAISED BY ME. VIOLA FOR ABOUT THE FIFTEENTH TIME TOLD ME THERE WERE NO PROBLEMS WITH ITS RATIFICATION. I TOLD HIM FROM WHAT I HAD READ IN PRESS

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