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ORIGIN ARA-15

INFO OCT-00 ADS-00 HA-05 /020 R

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P 181452Z JUL 79
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES PRIORITY

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E.O. 12065 N/A

TAGS: SHUM, AR

SUBJECT: PLAZA DE MAYO MOTHERS

1. DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY RALPH GUZMAN MET JULY 17 WITH JUANA MELLER DE PARGAMENT AND SOFIARENEE SLOTOPOLSKY DE EPELBAUM, MEMBERS OF THE PLAZA DE MAYO MOTHERS GROUP. THEY WERE ACCOMPANIED BY WENDYTURNBULL OF AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL. THE TWO ARGENTINEWOMEN HAD PARTICIPATED IN A CEREMONY ORGANIZED BY AMNESTY HELD THE SAME DAY IN THE RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING IN WHICH PROMINENT AMERICAN WOMEN WERE PRESENTED WITH SCARVES BEARING THE NAMES OF DISAPPEARED PERSONS IN ARGENTINA.

2. THE TWO WOMEN DISCUSSED THE PROBLEM OF DISAPPEARANCES IN ARGENTINA AND THE MAJOR OBSTACLES THEY HAD ENCOUNTERED IN SEEKING TO ESTABLISH THE WHEREABOUTS-OF THEIR MISSING RELATIVES, PARTICULARLY THE GOVERNMENT'S REFUSAL TO HONOR HABEAS CORPUS PETITIONS AND THE SMOKE SCREEN OF

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DISINFORMATION PUT OUT BY GOA AGENCIES ON THE ISSUE.

THEY WERE DISTURBED BY THE RECENT SPEECH OF GENERAL VIOLA IN WHICH HE SPOKE OF THE DISAPPEARED AS "THOSE-

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WHO WILL BE ABSENT FOREVER." THEY DID NOT ACCEPT THE POSSIBILITY THAT ALL OF THE DISAPPEARED ARE DEAD AND EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT INTERNATIONAL ATTENTION FOCUSED ON ARGENTINA IN ADVANCE OF THE IACHR VISIT IN SEPTEMBER MAY RESULT IN THE REAPPEARANCE OF SOME OF THE MISSING. THEY SAID THAT WHAT THEY WANT TO KNOW IS "WHERE ARE OUR SONS, WHAT CONDITION THEY ARE IN, WHAT CHARGES HAVE BEEN MADE AGAINST THEM, AND WHAT CHANCE HAVE THEY TO DEFEND THEMSELVES." THE WOMEN EXPRESSED THEIR HOPE THAT THE EMBASSY HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICER POSITION WILL BE FILLED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, PREFERABLY BEFORE THE VISIT OF THE IACHR. MS. TURNBULL ALSO RAISED THE ISSUE OF SUPPLYING NAMES OF PERSONS RELEASED UNDER RIGHT OF OPTION TO AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL SO THAT AI CAN ASSIST IN PLACING PAROLEES WITH SPONSORING ORGANIZATIONS IN THE U.S.

3. DR. GUZMAN EXPRESSED OUR DEEP SYMPATHY FOR THE PLIGHT OF THE TWO MOTHERS AND THE MANY OTHER ARGENTINES WHO SEEK INFORMATION ON DISAPPEARED RELATIVES. HE SAID THE U.S. WILL CONTINUE ITS EFFORTS ON THIS PROBLEM. HE SAID THAT WE FULLY RECOGNIZE THE VERY HIGH PRIORITY OF FILLING THE HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICER POSITION AND ARE WORKING TO ACHIEVE THIS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. HE PROMISED THAT WE WOULD LOOK INTO THE PROBLEM OF SUPPLYING AI WITH NAMES OF PERSONS TO WHOM WE HAVE GIVEN CERTIFICATES OF ACCEPTABILITY UNDER THE RIGHT OF OPTION PROGRAM.

4. THE TWO ARGENTINE WOMEN AND MS. TURNBULL EXPRESSED

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GREAT SATISFACTION OVER THE CEREMONY HELD AT THE RAYBURN BUILDING. THEY BELIEVED THAT THEY HAVE BROADENED THEIR SUPPORT AMONG AMERICAN WOMEN IN THEIR STRUGGLE TO OBTAIN INFORMATION FROM THE GOA ON THE STATE OF THE DISAPPEARED. THEY SAID, HOWEVER, THEY FEARED THEY MAY BE SUBJECT TO REPRISALS WHEN THEY RETURN TO BUENOS AIRES. VANCE

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