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DRAFTED BY ARA/SC:GWHITMAN/ARA:SDEATON
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S/S-O:JBECKER

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TO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES IMMEDIATE
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AMEMBASSY MEXICO PRIORITY
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~~EXDIS~~, SAN SALVADOR FOR AMBASSADOR BOWDLER

E.O. 12065 GDS 7/19/86 (EATON, SAMUEL D.)

TAGS: PINT, BL, AR

SUBJECT: ARGENTINE POSITION ON BOLIVIAN COUP

- 1. C - ENTIRE TEXT.
- 2. ARGENTINE AMBASSADOR AJA ESPIL PHONED DAS EATON JULY 18 FOR BRIEFING ON U.S. POSITION ON BOLIVIAN COUP.

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AFTER RECEIVING OUTLINE OF U.S. POSITION, DURING WHICH EATON EMPHASIZED IMPORTANCE OF ARGENTINE STANCE, AJA ESPIL INDICATED HE WOULD RECOMMEND THAT HIS GOVERNMENT:

-- WITHHOLD IMMEDIATE RECOGNITION OF NEW BOLIVIAN GOVERNMENT AS WAS DONE FOLLOWING NATUCSH COUP;

-- URGE COUP LEADERS THAT THERE BE NO VIOLENCE.

- 3. ON JULY 19, AJA ESPIL CALLED AGAIN TO SAY THAT AFTER HIS REPORT OF THE PREVIOUS DAY TO THE ARGENTINE FOREIGN MINISTRY UNDERSECRETARY CAVANDOLI HAD CALLED HIM TO SAY THAT ARGENTINA WOULD TAKE A CAUTIOUS LINE ON RECOGNITION SINCE THE SITUATION IN BOLIVIA WAS STILL FLUID.

MOREOVER, ARGENTINA WAS IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH VENEZUELA, AS WELL AS BRAZIL, ITS NORMAL INTERLOCUTOR ON BOLIVIAN MATTERS. ARGENTINA UNDERSTOOD THE VENEZUELAN AMBASSADOR WOULD STAY IN PLACE IN LA PAZ FOR THE TIME BEING TO HELP WITH ASYLEE PROBLEMS.

- 4. EATON REINFORCED HIS STATEMENT OF THE U.S. POSITION OF THE FOLLOWING DAY BY MAKING THE FOLLOWING POINTS.

Department of State, A/GIS/IPS/SRP
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 With concurrence of: _____ obtained _____ notobt. _____
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THERE WAS NO POSSIBLE JUSTIFICATION FOR THE COUP. THE COUP LEADERS HAD TAKEN PREVENTIVE ACTION AGAINST INSTALLATION OF A MODERATE LEFT GOVERNMENT. THEIR ASSERTIONS THAT SILES WOULD HAVE LED A MARXIST GOVERNMENT WERE COMPLETELY WITHOUT FOUNDATION. THE REAL PURPOSE OF THEIR ACTION WAS TO SATISFY THEIR OWN PERSONAL AMBITIONS. THEY WERE A GROUP OF CRIMINALS WHO WOULD CONCENTRATE PRIMARILY ON PERSONAL GAIN AND WOULD ONLY BE ABLE TO GOVERN BY CONTINUING SEVERE REPRESSION. EATON DID NOT THINK THE GOVERNMENT OF ARGENTINA WOULD WANT TO BE ASSOCIATED WITH THEM.

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5. AJA SAID HE RECOGNIZED WHAT EATON WAS SAYING, BUT ARGENTINA AND BRAZIL WERE IN DELICATE POSITIONS AS NEIGHBORS OF BOLIVIA AND WOULD HAVE TO DEAL WITH THE GARCIA MEZA GOVERNMENT IF IT IN FACT CONSOLIDATED ITS POSITION.

6. EATON ARGUED THAT THE BEST COURSE FOR ARGENTINA AND BRAZIL WOULD BE TO SUPPORT ANY POSSIBLE CHANGE OF COURSE IN PRESENT EVENTS TO MODERATE THE SITUATION AND LEAD TO A RETURN TO CONSTITUTIONAL, CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT. HE SAID IT WAS CLEAR FROM THE VOTING IN THE ELECTIONS THAT THE MILITARY DID NOT HAVE POPULAR SUPPORT, CIVILIAN RESISTANCE WAS LIKELY, THE BOLIVIAN CHURCH WOULD TAKE A STRONG STAND AGAINST THE COUP, AND OVER THE LONG TERM A MILITARY GOVERNMENT SUSTAINED BY REPRESSION WOULD ONLY FAVOR THE EXTREME LEFT WHICH CERTAINLY WAS NOT IN THE INTEREST OF ARGENTINA AND BRAZIL.

7. AJA ASKED WHETHER THERE WERE MORE MODERATE MILITARY LEADERS WHO WERE OPPOSED TO THE COUP. EATON SAID HE HAD TO THINK THERE WERE AND MENTIONED THE INSTITUTIONALISTS, BUT HE DID NOT KNOW WHETHER, AS THE SITUATION EVOLVED, THEY COULD ACHIEVE A POSITION OF STRENGTH.

8. EMBASSY BUENOS AIRES SHOULD REINFORCE ON CONTINUOUS BASIS WITH ARGENTINE AUTHORITIES THE IDEAS THAT (A) THEY SHOULD ADOPT CAUTIOUS ATTITUDE ON RECOGNITION OF THIS BOLIVIAN GOVERNMENT, AND (B) THEY SHOULD FIND WAYS TO URGE A MODERATE COURSE ON BOLIVIAN MILITARY, AVOIDING VIOLENCE AND LEADING TO AN EARLY RETURN TO CONSTITUTIONAL, CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT.

CHRISTOPHER

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Document Information	
DOC_NBR	1980STATE190140
FILM	D800347-1095