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TO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY ASUNCION PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LIMA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY CARACAS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY QUITO PRIORITY

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E.O. 12065: GDS, 7/29/86 (BUSHNELL, JOHN A.)

TAGS: OVIP, AR, PA

SUBJECT: POSTPONEMENT OF BOWDLER VISIT

REF: STATE 199606

1. C - ENTIRE TEXT

2. ARGENTINE CHARGE, ROBERTO DALTON, CALLED ON
DAS EATON MORNING OF JULY 29 TO DISCUSS POSTPONEMENT
OF BOWDLER VISIT TO ARGENTINA. HE SAID THAT HE HAD
SPOKEN ON THE PHONE TO AMBASSADOR AJA ESPIL IN BUENOS

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AIRES. DALTON NOTED THAT ARGENTINA'S ANNOUNCEMENT
OF RESUMPTIONS OF RELATIONS HAD COME AS A SURPRIZE
TO HIM. HE RECOGNIZED THAT AJA ESPIL HAD TOLD EATON
UNDER INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE ARGENTINE MINISTRY OF
FOREIGN AFFAIRS THAT ARGENTINA WOULD NOT BE THE
FIRST TO RECOGNIZE. HOWEVER, HE ALSO SAID THE "CANCEL-
LATION" OF BOWDLER'S VISIT WAS A VERY SERIOUS SETBACK.

HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT HE WANTED TO RAISE A COUPLE
OF THOUGHTS WITH MR. EATON ON THIS SUBJECT. FIRST,
DALTON SUGGESTED THAT IT WOULD BE USEFUL FOR AMBASSA-
DOR BOWDLER TO TELEPHONE DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER
CAVANDOLI TO DISCUSS THE POSTPONING OF HIS TRIP.
SECOND, DALTON ASKED IF IT MIGHT NOT BE POSSIBLE
FOR AMBASSADOR BOWDLER TO GO AHEAD WITH A TRIP,
POSSIBLY TO CIPOLETTI (HIS BIRTHPLACE), BUT STRIP
THE VISIT OF ANY OFFICIAL CHARACTER.

3. DAS EATON RESPONDED FAVORABLY TO THE SUGGESTION
THAT AMBASSADOR BOWDLER TELEPHONE CAVANDOLI, PROMISING
TO TAKE IT UP WITH HIM UPON HIS RETURN. HOWEVER,
WITH RESPECT TO A PRIVATE VISIT, MR. EATON SAID
THAT SINCE AMBASSADOR BOWDLER ALREADY WAS EN ROUTE

~~Department of State, A/GIS/IPS/SRP~~
Change to _____
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Exemptions b () () E.O. 13526 25x () ()
Declassify after _____
With concurrence of: _____
_____ obtained _____ not obt.
IPS by SW Date 12-15-14

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BACK TO WASHINGTON, THIS WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE.

4. DAS EATON THEN GAVE A DETAILED EXPLANATION OF REASONS BEHIND POSTPONEMENT OF ARGENTINE TRIP TO DALTON. HE NOTED THAT THERE HAD BEEN MISGIVINGS ABOUT THE TIMING OF THE VISIT EVEN BEFORE THE QUESTION AROSE OF GOA RECOGNITION OF THE BOLIVIAN REGIME. HE POINTED OUT THAT DESPITE GOA ASSURANCES TO THE CONTRARY, WE HAVE RECEIVED INFORMATION THAT INDICATES THAT THE GOA OR SOME INDIVIDUAL OFFICIAL ARGENTINES,

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PERHAPS IN THE MILITARY MISSION IN LA PAZ OR INTELLIGENCE OPERATIONS, ENCOURAGED OR WERE OTHERWISE INVOLVED IN THE COUP PREPARATIONS AND MAY HAVE TAKEN PART IN ITS IMPLEMENTATION. THESE REPORTS CONCERNED US AND CREATED DOUBTS AS TO THE DESIRABILITY OF A BOWDLER TRIP TO ARGENTINA AT THIS TIME.

5. DAS EATON REITERATED THAT. WHILE GOA RECOGNITION OF THE BOLIVIAN REGIME WAS UNFORTUNATELY TIMED, THIS HAD NOT BEEN THE ONLY REASON UNDERLYING THE POSTPONEMENT OF AMBASSADOR BOWDLER'S VISIT. INDEED, WE REALISE THAT IF THE BOLIVIAN REGIME ESTABLISHES ITSELF, MOST NATIONS--INCLUDING OURSELVES--WILL HAVE TO FACE UP TO THE ISSUE OF RECOGNITION OR CONTINUING RELATIONS. REPORTS OF ARGENTINE INVOLVEMENT WITH AND SUPPORT FOR THE COUP TOGETHER WITH THE KNOWLEDGE THAT GOA RECOGNITION MIGHT HAPPEN VIRTUALLY COINCIDENT WITH THE BOWDLER VISIT UNDERLAY THE DECISION.

6. DALTON THEN SAID THAT THE POSTPONEMENT INEVITABLY WILL HAVE A VERY SEVERE NEGATIVE PUBLIC REACTION, ONE THAT WILL BE EXPLOITED BY CERTAIN SECTORS, AND TERMED THE POSTPONEMENT, AGAIN, A SERIOUS SETBACK

IN OUR RELATIONS. DAS EATON RESPONDED BY POINTING OUT THAT WE WERE TALKING OF A POSTPONEMENT NOT CANCELLATION. HE ALSO SAID THAT, SINCE THE VISIT HAD NOT BEEN ANNOUNCED, WE WOULD MAKE NO ANNOUNCEMENT OF ITS POSTPONEMENT. HOWEVER, HE SAID, WE DO EXPECT INQUIRIES FROM THE PRESS, AND WOULD TRY TO RESPOND TO THEM IN SUCH A WAY AS NOT TO EXACERBATE THE SITUATION.

7. DAS EATON THEN BRIEFED DALTON ON WHAT, IN OUR VIEW, HAS BEEN LOST WITH THE BOLIVIAN COUP. HE POINTED OUT THAT BOLIVIA HAD HELD FREE ELECTIONS

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AND HAD BEEN RETURNING TO DEMOCRACY. HE NOTED THAT FOR THOSE WHO TRULY FEAR THAT THE EXTREME LEFT MIGHT SOMEDAY ASCEND TO POWER IN BOLIVIA, THE COUP IS NOT THE ANSWER. WE ARE CONVINCED THAT A SILES GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE BEEN A MODERATING FORCE, ONE THAT WOULD NOT HAVE TURNED OVER KEY POSITIONS OR SECTORS TO EXTREME LEFTISTS BUT, INSTEAD, WOULD HAVE PROVIDED RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT TO BOLIVIA AND, IN ITS OWN WAY, WOULD HAVE BEEN A BARRIER TO THE EXTREME LEFT. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE MILITARY ARE AMBITIOUS AND AVARICIOUS AND THEY CAN ONLY GOVERN THROUGH REPRESSION. THIS WILL DRIVE THE EXTREME LEFT UNDERGROUND, WHERE IT WILL GAIN, NOT LOSE, STRENGTH. THE BEGINNING OF GUERRILLA WARFARE MIGHT WELL FOLLOW, AND THE EXTREME LEFT'S PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE WOULD BE

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ENHANCED. THIS CERTAINLY WOULD NOT BE IN ARGENTINA'S INTEREST. YET THAT WAS WHAT OUR ANALYSIS CONCLUDED WOULD BE THE PROBABLE RESULT OF SUPPORT FOR THE GROUP NOW IN POWER IN BOLIVIA. DALTON PROMISED TO REPORT THE VIEWS THAT HAD BEEN EXPRESSED TO HIM. MUSKIE

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