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OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON

September 5, 1978

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION, AMBASSADOR GARDNER'S RESIDENCE,
ROME, ITALY

September 4, 1968, 1:50 p.m.

ARGENTINE SIDE

U.S. SIDE

President Jorge Rafael Videla
Col. Miguel A. Mallean Gil
Dr. Ricardo Yofre

Vice President Walter F. Mondale
A. Denis Clift
Anthony J. Hervey, Interpreter

The Vice President opened saying he was pleased to have the pleasure of the meeting. He recalled the meeting with Videla in the White House at the time of the Panama Canal Treaty ceremony. He said we want good relations but there are strains now -- human rights are a central concern. He added that he would report to the President personally on Videla's views.

President Videla thanked the Vice President for the meeting -- an extremely important opportunity to discuss these matters because he feels our relations are deteriorating. He fully concurs with President Carter's position on human rights. Argentina has belief in the democratic process so that men can live with dignity and freedom. He said Argentina is with the United States and not troubled by criticism when it is objective. However, he is concerned by attitudes projecting intervention in domestic affairs. He spoke with President Carter about this at the time of the Panama Canal Treaty signing but since that time he has had to delay announcement of an invitation to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights because of U.S. criticisms projecting intervention.

A second problem -- Argentine politicians were invited to visit the United States, but they, too, did not visit because of the U.S. statements intervening in our affairs. Mrs. Darrien's statements are contributing to a deterioration in our relations.

The Vice President asked if these were statements made in Argentina or in Washington.

President Videla said in Washington before Congress. He said the western world must be united and the United States must lead the western world. At the same time, the people of Argentina cannot tolerate intervention. This is his concern.

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The Vice President said we want to work with you to have good relations. The Humphrey-Kennedy Amendment is coming into effect. We must soon take decisions on the Amis-Chalmers deal. We want to be helpful. It would be important if Videla could have the Inter-American Human Rights Commission received in Argentina on terms acceptable to the commission. We would not link Argentine actions with our own.

The Vice President added that the U.S. press covers developments in Argentina closely. There are certain human rights cases with the people known to the press people such as Jacobo Timerman. To the extent that Videla makes progress in these cases, it will help us to make progress.

Videla said he understood and government-to-government relations are not easy. His concern is when a problem is raised to the level of a public or popular issue. This leads to situations where Argentine citizens adopt partisan positions against the United States, to situations where Argentine businessmen adopt partisan positions because they cannot conclude deals when Ex-Im does not grant a loan.

The Vice President repeated that it was important to put our relations on a more positive course. He suggested that it would be good if Assistant Secretary Vaky could come to Argentina to meet with Videla or with a person of his choice for a review of our relations. Videla asked if this would be after the Inter-American Commission or before. The Vice President said he thought it should be as soon as possible. Videla said perhaps he could arrange a visit by the Commission by mid-October. The Vice President asked if he could announce the visit earlier.

Videla then said he would like to point out that since the meeting at the Panama Canal signing, there have been a series of events showing the efforts on the part of the Argentine government:

- they have issued a list and names of all the detained;
- they have published a list of all of those who disappeared and then reappeared;
- last Christmas they released approximately 500;
- this last week, 65 individuals were freed;
- they have indicated that they are prepared to give a favorable response to the Commission on Human Rights;
- Timerman's situation has changed; he is now out of jail and under house arrest;

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-- Professor Bravo is now under house arrest and they expect the court to lessen the charges against him.

He said officials of the U.S. government are welcome in Argentina, but they must not give the impression that they are coming to inspect Argentina.

The Vice President said Mr. Vaky was a man of experience and would exercise discretion. He said it will be important to have the announcement on a visit by the Human Rights Commission on the terms acceptable to the Commission.

Videla said we could have done so last month, but Mrs. Darrien's statement before the Congress forced him to suspend the announcement. In the course of a few days, he believed he could develop a satisfactory announcement.

Mr. Cliff said that in considering the announcement, it is important to remember the timing in the United States. The Ex-Im Bank must take its decision by September 15. The Humphrey-Kennedy Amendment comes into effect on October 1. The Vice President said we would hope the announcement could be taken care of before then. He said this might enable us to move on the Ex-Im letter before the 15th deadline. Videla said this was his intention. He did not think it could be done, however, before September 15.

The Vice President said we are encouraged that you will receive the Commission. Will you authorize me to tell the President that this will be done. Videla said yes. The Vice President asked when Assistant Secretary Vaky may come. Videla said after his announcement on the commission. He said he would prefer to have Vaky to visit Argentina alone. The Vice President said he wouldn't give a yes on this, but he would recommend it. Videla asked if the U.S. will let him know ahead of time what Vaky's mission will be to permit him to prepare for it. The Vice President said we would communicate this.

President Videla observed that US-Argentine relations proceed in multiple channels - economic, political, cultural. Now our relations are focused solely on human rights. He said he can understand this problem if it is addressed in the broader spectrum of our overall relations and is not the single focus.

The Vice President said that if we can get on the road to progress in human rights, this whole other vista will open. He said he thought we are now at a point where we can turn the right way.

Videla said "I think we can. Mr. Vice President, I know your time was limited. I appreciate this meeting. Please give my greetings and best wishes to President Carter."

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Human Rights Cases

There has been widespread civil violence in Argentina since 1970. The unique quality of the present situation is the very large number of people detained and "disappeared" since the military came to power in 1976. A worldwide storm of criticism has resulted. Some of the cases of greatest interest are:

Detained 60S REVIEWED 08 Jul 2010 DECLASSIFIED FOR RELEASE IN PUS U L...q

Deutsch Family: Jewish groups, human rights organizations and some 25 Congressmen have asked our assistance for the family. President Carter raised the case of the Deutsches with President Videla during their bilateral.

The father, mother and three daughters were arrested in September. A son and his family fled and are now in the U.S. The Deutsch home was looted by the troops that arrested the family and there are reports that the family was tortured during the first weeks of confinement. In October, the mother and two daughters were released, but the youngest daughter and the father are still held. President Videla wrote to President Carter in October to say that the detained daughter was a member of a terrorist organization and that the father had known this yet had covered up for her. They would both be tried by military courts, the President said.

Jacobo Timerman: Editor and publisher of one of Argentina's largest newspapers, Timerman has become a cause celebre for Jewish groups and newspaper editors worldwide. Five Senators, Javits, Case, Sarbanes, Stone and Church wrote you asking for your intercession on Timerman's behalf while you are in Argentina. He was arrested in April and there are reports that he was mistreated. No charges have been placed against him, and his arrest is more surprising in that his paper generally took a pro-military line. Last week, Timerman's civil rights and control over his property were cancelled by the government. The U.S. Jewish community sees Timerman's case as a specific example of the anti-semitism which they believe is rampant in Argentina. The government forcefully denies it is anti-semitic and has passed a law prohibiting the incitation of racial violence.

Alfredo Bravo: Vice President of a major Argentine human rights group and President of the Argentine Teachers Union, Bravo was arrested in September. Because

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he had met a few days before his arrest with a visiting AFL-CIO delegation, the U.S. labor movement is very interested in his case.

Adolfo Perez Esquivel: A deeply religious and non-violent man, Perez Esquivel was the Coordinator of the ecumenical movement "Peace and Justice." He was arrested in April and has been imprisoned without charges since then. The Catholic Church and human rights groups have pressed strongly for his release.

Vogler Family: Lilliana Vogler was arrested in June 1975 and her father was arrested later that year, reportedly because he was making inquiries on her behalf. Lilliana was tried on charges of subversion but not allowed to renounce a confession which had been obtained under torture. The sentence should be given in the next few months. Guillermo Vogler has been granted permission to leave the country, (he will come to the U.S.) but has not actually been released. The Foreign Ministry has promised to try to speed up his release. There has been White House and Congressional interest in the case.

Disappearances

Mauricio Lopez: Another ecumenical leader, Lopez was rector of San Luis University when he disappeared in January. Church groups in the U.S. and Europe have shown great interest in his case.

Eduardo Saion: The former press secretary to Argentine President Lanusse, Saion disappeared in April.

Dagmar Hagelin: A dual national Swedish-Argentine student, Hagelin disappeared in January. The Swedish Prime Minister wrote to Videla about her, but was told the Argentines had no information. The Swedish government has now appealed to us for assistance.

Procedures for Reporting Human Rights Cases

The Argentine Foreign Office Working Group on Human Rights, to which we have made known our interest in specific cases, has been generally unresponsive to our requests for information. This week, however, they did reply to a backlog of our requests but provided little new information. Their failure to provide information may be a reflection of the GOA's indecision as to how to handle the cases of the "disappeared."

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