

# ARGENTINA-UNITED STATES BILATERAL RELATIONS

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Beatriz Nofal  
Joseph S. Tulchin

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**Woodrow Wilson  
International  
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for Scholars**

*Latin American Program*

*Cold War International History Project*

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An Historical Perspective And Future Challenges

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## INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

In August 2002, the U.S. Department of State released thousands of pages of declassified documents on Argentina. The bulk of them were drawn from the period of the military dictatorship, 1976–1983, and reflected on U.S.–Argentine relations with an emphasis on human rights. The declassification followed years of efforts by Argentine human rights groups, judges, and relatives of victims, together with researchers and non-governmental organizations in the United States, to obtain access to information that might shed light on the human rights abuses of the period, particularly disappearances.

The Woodrow Wilson Center’s Latin American Program and the Cold War International History Project jointly held a seminar in Washington, D.C., on March 5, 2003 (with a parallel event held in Buenos Aires in December 2003), to explore the events of some 25 years ago in light of new information contained in the documents. At the same time, and given the depth of Argentina’s economic and political crisis before and after the 2001 default, we were convinced that the discussion of the past could not be separated from the broader context of contemporary U.S.–Argentine relations. Argentina collapsed financially after several years of recession beginning in the late 1990s. It ultimately defaulted on much of its \$150 billion in external debt, and, by decree, converted to pesos billions of dollars of savings and retirement plans held inside the country. Millions of citizens in one of Latin America’s most prosperous countries were thrown into poverty and public confidence in politicians and the political process reached new lows.

The international community, including the United States and the International Monetary Fund, initially responded to this scenario with indifference or outright hostility. The U.S. Treasury as well as the IMF withheld new loans and blamed Argentina for the meltdown, downplaying the role of previous lending and investment policies by public entities and international financial markets. The sense of abandonment experienced by many Argentines was all the more acute given that, for most of the 1990s, Argentina had been touted as a model of the “Washington Consensus” regarding trade liberalization, privatization, and state reform.

This period had also witnessed a period of close friendship between the United States and Argentina, so close, in fact, that one senior Argentine official was moved to describe the relationship as *relaciones carnales*.

This publication explores current as well as past issues in the bilateral relationship. It reflects the perspectives of two groups of experts—scholars, journalists, and diplomats from both Argentina and the United States—whose work has long focused on aspects of U.S.-Argentine relations or who had themselves been direct participants in the policy process.

In this volume, researchers looking back at the period of the “dirty war” of the 1970s paint a complex and nuanced portrait of U.S. policy during the Ford and Carter administrations. In a paper prepared for this publication, *Carlos Osorio* of the National Security Archive describes U.S. support for the military junta and a contradictory message on human rights under the Ford administration; the clash between the Carter administration and the Argentine government over human rights in 1977; the parallel rapprochement and negotiations with “moderates” in the junta; and divisions within the U.S. Embassy in Buenos Aires over the scale of violations and over how forcefully and in what manner to promote human rights. Osorio concludes with a positive assessment of U.S. human rights policy during the period, arguing that, despite inconsistencies in the Carter approach, the work of U.S. Embassy staffers boosted the morale of human rights workers in Argentina, preserving their work if not their lives.

*Carlos Sersale di Cerisano* of the Argentine Foreign Ministry writes that recalling the Argentine “holocaust,” especially for a new generation of Argentines, has contributed to the consolidation of democracy by reminding citizens of the suffering of living under a military government. It is too early to tell, he says, what if any impact the release of documents will have on the changing of domestic laws (*Punto Final* and *Obediencia Debida*) that have protected members of the military from prosecution.<sup>1</sup> Sersale praises the “tremendous and courageous efforts” of a few U.S. diplomats at the time to save lives, and concludes that overall, the release of the documents has contributed to an improvement in bilateral relations.

University of Minnesota professor *Kathryn Sikkink* focuses on “critical junctures” of repression, arguing that repression is a choice that governments make in the context of ideology and a perception of costs and benefits. The attitude of the U.S. government is crucial in influencing both areas. She cites new material contained in the documents that sheds light on the period



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between June 1976 and January 1977, the peak of repression in Argentina as well as the period of what she calls the “green light” from U.S. policymakers. Sikkink refers to cables reflecting efforts by U.S. Ambassador to Argentina Robert Hill to impress on Argentine military leaders that certain norms could never be set aside in the fight against terrorism. These *démarches* were undermined by Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, who in meetings with the Argentine foreign minister (a naval admiral) encouraged the government to continue and even accelerate the war against subversion, making no mention of the methods, which included torture and disappearance.

*E.A. “Tex” Harris*, a political officer in the U.S. Embassy in Buenos Aires at the height of the dirty war, describes policy struggles within the U.S. government over how forcefully to incorporate human rights issues into diplomacy. National security doctrine, in which the Argentine military saw itself as protecting Argentina and Western civilization against “godless communism,” was counterposed against efforts by members of the U.S. Congress, non-governmental organizations, and church groups to make human rights a central component of U.S. foreign policy. Harris relates his own efforts to collect information from relatives of victims of repression, opening the U.S. Embassy to their visits and establishing an internal database unique to that period. He describes a “worm’s eye view” of U.S. decisionmaking concerning an Export-Import Bank loan to a U.S. company, to set up a turbine factory for a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Argentine Navy. His efforts to report on the beneficiary of the Ex-Im Bank loan were opposed by his superiors, and only through his extraordinary efforts did the information reach Washington in time to impact on the loan decision.

*María José Guembe* of the Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales (CELS) writes that the declassified documents provide an unparalleled registry of the methodology of the repressive system, as well as invaluable documentation for judicial investigations of human rights cases. The anonymity provided to mid-level Argentine officers who served as informants to U.S. Embassy officials resulted in extensive reporting on the organization of the state’s apparatus of terror as well as on individual acts of repression, including disappearances. She notes that the Argentine armed forces have continued to deny the existence of their own documents from the repressive period, although certain archives have surfaced, including those of the Naval Mechanics School (ESMA) and several intelligence units of provincial police.<sup>2</sup> Guembe outlines steps in the Argentine courts and the legislature to overturn the various laws

that preserve impunity, including the pardons issued by the Menem government in 1989-90. Guembe agrees that the effort to remember and document the past has contributed to the consolidation of Argentine democracy.

In a chapter adapted from his forthcoming book on Operation Condor, Columbia University School of Journalism professor *John Dinges* describes the dirty war in the Southern Cone as the “first war on terrorism.” In discussing Operation Condor, Dinges details the efforts of the security forces of six countries from 1973-1977 to operate across borders, through exchanges of intelligence and prisoners. He describes two kinds of authentic but contradictory U.S. messages about human rights in both Chile and Argentina, one condemning atrocities and the other displaying a “green light” to the abuses used to fight leftist opposition. In Argentina, Dinges portrays the Embassy as essentially ignorant of the approximately 4,000 disappearances that took place in 1976, as well as of the thousand or so killed by the military before the coup. Dinges’ own research, based on a document of an Argentine intelligence battalion chiefly responsible for the repression, places the number of those killed between 1975 and mid-1978 at some 22,000. Dinges calls U.S. human rights policy in Argentina during both the Ford and Carter periods ineffective, noting that human rights violations, including two to three thousand disappearances, continued in the first two years of the Carter administration.

*Cynthia Arnson* of the Woodrow Wilson Center describes the efforts in the U.S. Congress to end military aid to the Argentine junta in 1977, an initiative opposed by the Carter administration. She traces the emergence of human rights concerns in the Congress to the end of the Vietnam War as well as to specific events in Latin America, particularly the U.S. role in the overthrow of Chilean President Salvador Allende. Arnson describes a protracted effort to terminate assistance led by a handful of liberal Democrats in the House of Representatives, who built alliances with more conservative members of Congress and received the energetic backing of non-governmental organizations. She concludes that the effort to prohibit military aid to Argentina, although successful, was an aberration, occurring at a particular—and short-lived—moment of the Cold War; Congress lifted most of the restrictions at the request of the Reagan administration in 1981. Symbolically, she concludes that the restrictions provided encouragement to a small but politically significant group of Argentine actors pressing for human rights and democratic change.

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In exploring contemporary U.S.-Argentine relations, *Juan Gabriel Tokatlián* of the Universidad de San Andrés offers an overview of the broad contours of Argentine foreign policy. He refers to the major shift in Argentina's foreign policy 14 years ago, arguing that former president Carlos Menem's policy of "pragmatic acquiescence," in which the country subordinated its foreign policy to an external actor, had been costly and useless. The unrestricted alliance with the United States, manifest in Argentina's support for the first Gulf War and in Argentine support for U.S. positions in the United Nations, did not benefit Argentina; today the country is weaker, less relevant in international affairs, and more impoverished than it was a decade and a half ago. Tokatlián argues that the best foreign policy for Argentina would be a good domestic policy, which empowered institutions, developed national identity, and enhanced competence and maturity on the part of political leaders. He faults Argentine leaders for lacking the strategic vision to redesign a failed foreign policy and model of international insertion.

*Mark Falcoff* of the American Enterprise Institute refers to central challenges in the bilateral relationship, the first of which was the need "to restore a measure of political and moral credibility." For Argentina, distrust towards the United States has to do with the way in which the relationship was oversold during the Menem years, in which a policy of automatic alignment by Argentina with U.S. foreign policy initiatives was met with such gestures as the U.S. designation of Argentina as a non-NATO ally. In the U.S. financial press, Falcoff argues, there was a tendency to radically overstate the extent and profundity of the economic reforms enacted during the 1990s, and private banks and international financial institutions "took to believing their own propaganda" when a more skeptical approach to the economy would have been warranted. Since the onset of the current economic crisis, Argentines have become deeply disillusioned with U.S. indifference to their plight, and Falcoff faults the U.S. belief that "if Argentines simply tighten their belt everything will be all right." He also argues that Argentina's political credibility in the United States is linked to Argentines themselves finding a political leadership in which they can believe.

Argentine economist *Beatriz Nofal* of the consulting firm Eco-Axis describes multiple causes of Argentina's economic crisis, the worst in its history, emphasizing external shocks, domestic vulnerabilities, governance

problems, and mistakes in economic policy, especially adjustment policy. Nofal details the “tremendous social regression” that has left more than half of Argentines below the poverty line, but also cites signs of a precarious economic rebound. Argentine skepticism about closer integration into the world economy and cooperation with the United States has been fueled by Washington’s lack of reciprocity, she argues, at the same time that closer collaboration with the international community did not necessarily mean subordination. She says that a successful and balanced FTAA is needed, one that eliminates agricultural and agro-industrial subsidies and non-tariff barriers to trade and does not widen per capita income gaps. Nofal argues that if the United States wants more Argentine engagement in the war against terrorism, Argentina needs more cooperation in dealing with national and regional problems.

*Joseph S. Tulchin* of the Woodrow Wilson Center calls for a realistic foreign policy posture on the part of Argentina that is rooted in a sense of the country’s strategic objectives. He argues that Argentina cannot define itself in relation to the United States and insists that, given conditions of asymmetry, it is unrealistic to expect a balanced relationship between the two countries. He describes as a “signal success” the fact that management of the current political and economic crisis was achieved without military intervention.

Since our March 2003 seminar, Argentina has gone through an important electoral transition. Néstor Kirchner assumed the presidency in May 2003, after his chief rival in a second round, former President Carlos Menem, withdrew from the race. Winning with only 22 percent of the vote, Kirchner quickly achieved high domestic approval ratings by his commitment to end “politics as usual,” emphasize the rule of law, and re-establish the legitimacy of the political system. In his first months in office, Kirchner raised the minimum wage, tightened labor laws, cancelled government contracts with certain private sector companies, and purged institutions including the armed forces, the police, and the judiciary. He also supported efforts to establish accountability for past human rights abuses, announcing in his inaugural address that he planned to govern “without rancor but with memory.”<sup>3</sup> He has openly supported the overturning of the 1980s amnesty laws, and repealed a decree that prevented the extradition of military officers to stand trial abroad for human rights crimes.

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Kirchner was also active on the international front. He visited Washington in July 2003, meeting briefly with President Bush, who appeared non-committal but supportive of Kirchner's efforts to sign a medium-term agreement with the IMF.<sup>4</sup> At the same time, Kirchner and his foreign minister, Rafael Bielsa, have emphasized that they will privilege Argentina's relations with Mercosur. Argentina has mapped a more independent course in its foreign policy, joining other Latin American and European countries in opposing the U.S. war in Iraq, and, unlike other nations of the hemisphere, seeking improved relations with Cuba..

What these initial moves augur, both domestically and internationally, is uncertain. In the meantime, we offer these reflections on past, present, and future U.S.-Argentine relations, in the hope they contribute to more intelligent debate on the issues that have united as well as divided our two countries.

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We wish to express gratitude to H.E. Eduardo Amadeo, Argentina's past ambassador to Washington, who, in opening the March 2003 seminar, reminded participants of the intimate connection between economic adjustment, governance, and social issues in Argentina and elsewhere.

Numerous staff members, interns, and junior scholars of the Woodrow Wilson Center provided invaluable assistance with the March 2003 conference and this publication. Joseph S. Tulchin, director of the Latin American Program and founder of the project "Argentina @ the Wilson Center," provided invaluable leadership. Giselle Cohen deserves special recognition for her energy, interest, and enthusiasm. Mircea Munteanu, Elizabeth Bryan, and Ronnie Dempsey also ably assisted with conference organization. Tamara Taraciuk and interns Andrew Stevenson and Carolina Dallal provided excellent research assistance. Kent Hughes of the Wilson Center's Project on America and the Global Economy provided helpful comments on the Introduction. Gretta Tovar Siebentritt assisted with translation. Derek Lawlor provided, as usual, outstanding production assistance.

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and the conference on which it was based, as well as other activities of the Wilson Center's Latin American Program and Cold War International History Project.

*Cynthia J. Arnson, Latin American Program  
Christian Ostermann, Cold War International History Project  
November 2003*

## NOTES

1. In August 2003, the Argentine Congress approved legislation to overturn the *Punto Final* (Full Stop) and *Obediencia Debida* (Due Obedience) laws passed in 1986 and 1987, respectively, that effectively ended human rights trials of military officers. Before those laws were passed, nine members of the military junta had been tried and convicted in Argentine courts of human rights crimes, including kidnapping and murder. Convicted officers as well as jailed left-wing guerrillas were pardoned by President Carlos Menem following his 1989 election.

Argentine courts at both the lower and appellate level have declared the laws passed in 1986 and 1987 unconstitutional. The Supreme Court, itself in turmoil due to accusations of corruption and political bias, had not ruled on the matter as of this writing in November 2003.

2. Files from the Directorate of Intelligence of the Buenos Aires police, disbanded in 1998, were declassified in October 2003 by the Commission on Memory of the province of Buenos Aires. In July 2003, President Néstor Kirchner ordered the state intelligence agency SIDE and other police forces to open their files on the 1994 bombing of the Jewish community center of the Asociación Mutual Israelita Argentina (AMIA), which killed 85 people and wounded hundreds more. Kirchner also ordered SIDE agents, including a former chief, to testify at a trial of police agents accused of participating in the attack. See Fabián Debesa, "Revelan fichas de la Bonaerense con datos de desaparecidos," *Clarín*, October 14, 2003; Larry Rohter, "Argentina Reviews a Clumsy Case by Its Spies," *New York Times*, July 13, 2003, p. 9; and Guido Braslavsky, "Abren los archivos secretos de las fuerzas de seguridad por la AMIA," *Clarín*, July 22, 2003.

3. Quoted in Larry Rohter, "Letter from South America: Now the Dirtiest of Wars Won't Be Forgotten," *New York Times*, June 18, 2003, p. 4.

4. The agreement was signed in September. On details of Kirchner's Washington visit, see Mike Allen, "Argentine Leader Pledges More Reforms," *Washington Post*, July 24, 2003, p. 17. Newly-confirmed U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Roger Noriega expressed strong support for Argentina. Noting that "Argentina enjoys terrific political support from the United States and the G8 [Groups of Eight leading industrialized nations]," Noriega said that the political will in Argentina to "put its house in order" existed and that "there should be some flexibility on the part of the IMF in responding to this challenge." Quoted in Adam Thomson, "US supports Argentina on IMF talks," *Financial Times*, September 9, 2003.

## PART ONE

# THE DIRTY WAR'S DECLASSIFIED DOCUMENTS: A NEW PERSPECTIVE ON BILATERAL RELATIONS

JOHN DINGES

Columbia University School of Journalism

The release of the declassified documents allows us, for the first time, to view Argentine history and the whole history of the dirty war in the Southern Cone of South America in the 1970s—including all of the six countries involved in what we now know as Operation Condor—in their relationships with each other and in their relationships with the United States. The relevance of this is not a mystery; it is not history, nor is it the past. The dirty war in the Southern Cone was the first war on terrorism. And the lessons of how the United States related to the terror that was being practiced—both by the guerrilla organizations and by the governments who were our allies—are extremely important as we wend our way through the very difficult foreign policy environment of the new war on terror.

We will be dealing with these questions in the chapters that follow, but I wanted at the outset to frame the discussion in light of that historical question.

In terms of Argentina, how do we examine the history of a country that during a very short period of time killed approximately one tenth of one percent of its total population? I place the number of deaths in Argentina at 22,000. This figure is higher than the one reported by the National Commission on Disappeared Persons (CONADEP, also known as the *Sábato Commission*), but lower than the number used—as an estimate or extrapolation—by the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, a human rights group formed by relatives of the disappeared. The figure of 22,000

is based on documents of the *Batallón de Inteligencia 601*, the Intelligence Battalion 601, which was the chief repressive apparatus in Argentina during this period. The documents were found among more than 3,000 documents confiscated from the office of Chilean DINA operative Enrique Arancibia in Buenos Aires. Arancibia reported to DINA, the Chilean secret police, that Battalion 601 calculated the number of people secretly killed (disappeared) at 22,000 people between 1975 and mid-1978. Another document provided a partial list.

The declassified U.S. documents provide a new way—a fresh and revolutionary way—of analyzing the mass killing and what actually happened during the dirty war.



## **The Dirty War's Declassified Documents: A New Perspective on Bilateral Relations**

**CARLOS OSORIO**

**O**n August 20, 2002, to the credit of Secretary of State Colin Powell, the U.S. Department of State released 4,677 documents relating to human rights in Argentina from 1975 to 1984. The decision to review the records of the Department of State was made by then Secretary of State Madeleine Albright after meeting with the Mothers and Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo, along with the Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales (CELS), in Buenos Aires in August 2000. For over a year, the Department had received numerous petitions from judges, human rights groups, relatives of victims, and the government of Argentina, as well as from Senator Edward Kennedy, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the United States, and judges in Europe. The National Security Archive worked with CELS in Buenos Aires, human rights activist Sara Méndez in Uruguay, and Professor Ariel Armony of Colby College in the United States to present the Department of State with a 300-item guide containing a chronology of key human rights events and lists of clandestine detention centers and the most egregious perpetrators, to help the State Department's searches for documents. Thanks to Under Secretary of State for Management Grant Greene, all 4,677 documents were printed and copies ready to be shipped to the original requestors by August 2001. After the release date was postponed in September 2001 and then again in late 2001, the National Security Archive worked to guarantee the integrity of the collection and pressured for its release in 2002. Working with CELS in Argentina, the National Security Archive's Southern Cone Documentation Project is carrying out a continuous research project, making publications and selections in an effort to inform the public, human rights groups, and judges about the Collection.

Bound in 35 volumes, each with 500 pages, the documents include more than 2,000 telegrams exchanged between the U.S. Embassy in Buenos Aires and the Department of State; nearly 400 memoranda of conversations between U.S. officials and human rights groups, politicians, journalists, and businessmen, as well as Argentine government officials; more than 200 congressional requests on behalf of victims; more than 500 letters from relatives of victims, human rights groups, and U.S. NGOs; dozens of reports by regional human rights groups; several dozens of analyses, policy discussions, and some decision papers from the bureaus of Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs (HR/HA), Latin American Affairs (ARA), Intelligence and Research (INR), as well as a few from the secretary of state and the White House.

The Department of State's "tasker" ordering the review and declassification of documents purposefully adopted a narrow focus to respond to the specific names and issues in the judges' requests. There were actual discussions at State about not including policy decision papers. We have identified hundreds of cables referenced in the declassified documents that did not make it into the collection. Nevertheless, the resulting collection is an outstanding source for scholars, policymakers, historians, and human rights activists wanting to revisit the period. The following descriptive comments are the product of a survey of hundreds of documents in the collection and do not pretend to be a finished analysis or review of U.S.-Argentine bilateral relations; the discussion aims, rather, to bring to the attention of the reader those documents that reveal new aspects of bilateral relations and identify veins for further research. Documents appended at the end of this volume, including some previously published by the National Security Archive, are intended to serve those two purposes.<sup>1</sup>

The paper is divided into six sections: 1) U.S. policy under the Ford administration in 1976; 2) the clash between the Argentine government and the Carter administration over human rights policy in 1977; 3) the rapprochement between the U.S. government and the Videla regime in 1977-78; 4) agreement between the White House and Videla and the rescinding of human rights sanctions; 5) dissent and tensions within the U.S. Embassy over human rights policy; and 6) the contribution of the documents to peoples' understanding of the period, and to human rights today.

***“U.S. Position: The best executed and most civilized coup in Argentine History”***

**Robert C. Hill, U.S. Ambassador in Argentina, March 29, 1976**

During the last two years of the Ford administration, Argentina went from growing political crisis and anarchic violence to military rule and organized state repression. In 1975, dozens of American businesses and the U.S. Embassy became targets of two guerrilla groups, the *Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo* (People's Revolutionary Army, or ERP) and the *Montoneros*. In 1976, the Ford administration welcomed the military junta with a \$50 million security assistance package, \$16 million more than the previous year, and planned to increase aid to \$63.5 million the following year. U.S. officials' attitudes conveyed understanding of the Argentine need to carry out a strong counterinsurgency offensive. In the early months of the junta, the view held by the U.S. Embassy in Buenos Aires was that human rights violations were a few excesses of loose right wing elements in government units and the junta was not responsible.<sup>2</sup>

Between May 1976 and the end of the year, the documents illustrate two conflicting human rights dynamics: on the one hand, the emergence of a U.S. human rights policy toward Argentina, and on the other hand, a contrary message to the Argentines from the U.S. secretary of state undermining the substance of this evolving policy. The Embassy and State Department's views were forced to evolve rapidly as several Americans were victims of kidnapping and torture, the killings and disappearances of numerous refugees (in Argentina) became notorious, and congressional and NGO correspondence on behalf of Argentine victims flooded the State Department and the Embassy. By mid-1976, the U.S. government had taken notice of the involvement of government forces in widespread human rights violations. In August, the Department of State instructed the Embassy to issue a *démarche* on the disappearance of numerous leftists by the coordinated state intelligence services of the Southern Cone nations, dubbed Operation Condor; and in September, U.S. Ambassador to Argentina Robert Hill was instructed to deliver a *démarche* on human rights before junta President Jorge Rafael Videla.

Soon thereafter, however, tensions developed between U.S. diplomats in Buenos Aires and the secretary of state in Washington, as the Argentine generals discounted Embassy *démarches* on human rights, claiming that

Secretary of State Henry Kissinger understood and tacitly supported their counterinsurgency campaign.<sup>3</sup>

By the end of 1976, the Department of State conservatively estimated that 1,000 people had died since the March 24 coup. U.S. officials rushed to elaborate a theoretical framework to evaluate the junta's responsiveness to human rights concerns and justified a request to Congress for \$30 million in security assistance to the Argentine military. Several concrete human rights initiatives that were later developed in full, such as asking the Argentine government to produce lists of prisoners and invite the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights to make an on-site visit, started to take shape within the Department of State in late December 1976. Without fanfare, the U.S. government turned down a munitions control license for items destined for the Argentine state intelligence service.

***“Human Rights: the Key to Our Relations”***  
**Department of State Talking Points, May 4, 1977**

Early in 1977 the human rights policy of the new administration of President Jimmy Carter set up a clash with the Argentine junta. The first contact between State Department officials and junta diplomats in early February reflected a new and critical tone: “[W]e can not accept that people with different views are persecuted, tortured and murdered.” Incredulous Argentine diplomats were also told that the new administration was serious about its human rights policy and that the issue would be crucial in U.S.-Argentine relations.<sup>4</sup> There is evidence in the documents collection that the Department of State had to work to ensure that the Pentagon and the CIA were on the same wavelength as the Department of State regarding human rights policy toward Argentina.<sup>5</sup>

In late February 1977, the Carter administration cut in half, but did not eliminate, the Ford administration request for military aid in the upcoming fiscal year.<sup>6</sup> The administration's request was accompanied by criticism of Argentina's human rights record and as a result the Argentine junta refused to accept the aid package. Negotiations over military credits involving previously approved funds to Argentina were stopped, and the actual transfer or delivery of military credits, sales, and training that had been previously agreed-upon was slowed down under strong pressure

from Congress and the newly created Bureau of Humanitarian Affairs (D/HA) in the Department of State. In a memo for Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Terence Todman on the topic of U.S.-Argentine military relations, an official noted that “ARA has agreed with D/HA that we should stay out of the Internal Security (policing and crowd control) field but D/HA wants to go further and ban all transfers.” The Carter administration also began using its voice and vote in international financial institutions such as the World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank to oppose loans to Argentina, and slowed the issuing of bank credits provided by the U.S. Export Import Bank.<sup>7</sup>

Numerous cables reflect the State Department's new agenda for human rights in Argentina in 1977, none more thoroughly than an outline addressed to Assistant Secretary Patt Derian, which included the following objectives:

- Liberation of prisoners, either directly or through use of right of option. End to arbitrary arrest. End to prolonged detention without charge.
- Restitution of civilian due process.
- End to use of torture and the punishment of those who commit those acts, with public disclosure.
- Lifting of the state of siege.
- Accounting of those detained or sentenced.
- Reinstitution of civil liberties: association, expression, press.
- Steps toward ending authoritarian rule and providing transition to civilian democratic system.<sup>8</sup>

Later on, accounting for the disappeared would be added to the list.

Early in the year, the U.S. Embassy in Argentina was instructed to “follow human rights developments closely, reporting on the effect of U.S. sanctions and recommending appropriate modifications in response to changing circumstances; encourage a steady stream of fact-finding missions from the U.S.; enquire concerning individual human rights cases with GOA authorities; maintain close liaison with legitimate Argentine human rights groups and the Church and encourage the support of other diplomatic missions on human rights; use ICA [International Communication Agency] assets extensively in pursuit of our human rights objectives.”<sup>9</sup>

From then on, the ambassador, the deputy chief of mission, and Embassy political officers engaged in numerous meetings with human

rights groups, dissidents, and independent sources, as well as labor leaders, Catholic Church officials, politicians, journalists, and political analysts. The Embassy's human rights office opened its doors to regular contact with victims and relatives of victims, such as the *Madres de la Plaza de Mayo* (Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo) and the *Asamblea Permanente por los Derechos Humanos* (Permanent Assembly for Human Rights). Human rights advocate Emilio Mignone and journalist Robert Cox figure prominently among those whose opinion was regularly sought. For their part, using Embassy intelligence contacts, security officers gathered information on the repressive apparatus, human rights abuses in general, and the fate of some disappeared.

The doubling of the number of documents released in the Collection for each year (i.e. from 500 for 1976 to nearly 1,000 for 1977) points to feverish paper production within the Embassy and exchange of information with the Department of State. The monthly Embassy Human Rights Update was regularized, as was the "Summary of Terrorist Activities," which appeared every two weeks. Dozens of Embassy analyses and statistics on trends in human rights violations and counter-terrorist sweeps, as well as diagrams on the structure of the repressive apparatus and a remarkable database of nearly 10,000 victims, the majority disappeared, fed the policy elaboration process at the Department of State.

***"A Time to Support Argentina's Videla"***

**Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs Terence Todman,  
September 27, 1977**

Simultaneously alongside U.S. sanctions and more open criticism of the Argentine generals' human rights practices, in 1977 the door was opened to Argentine President Videla, who met with a remarkable number of high ranking U.S. officials, including Assistant Secretaries of State Derian (Human Rights), Todman (Inter-American Affairs), and Dalley (International Organizations), as well as Secretary of State Cyrus Vance and President Carter himself. Various declassified documents reveal a more conciliatory tone in these high-level encounters involving U.S. and Argentine Foreign Ministry officials.<sup>10</sup> One document from the May 1977 meeting in Caracas shows Assistant Secretary Todman and junta President Videla expressing mutual understanding: Videla of Carter's

human rights policy and Todman of the obstacles Videla had to overcome to make improvements; another shows the Argentine Foreign Ministry proposing a dialogue in June, and others concern a meeting between Secretary Vance and Argentine Foreign Minister Oscar Montes at the Organization of American States General Assembly held in Grenada later that same month.

This parallel private policy of high-level engagement with the Argentine government reached its apex when President Videla was granted a meeting with President Carter in Washington in September 1977. As one U.S. official reported, "President Videla's fortuitous September 6-10 visit was a giant step in the 'rapprochement' process and it resulted in promise of yet another visit—that of Secretary Vance."<sup>11</sup> Videla promised Carter that many of the 4,000 detainees being held under Argentine executive power decree would be liberated by Christmas, that Argentine relatives of American citizens (the Deutsch family) would be released, and that other improvements in human rights would be implemented. During the meeting, it was decided that Secretary of State Vance would visit Argentina before the end of 1977, and that he would deliver a list containing the names of thousands of the disappeared, a list that human rights groups had made available to the Department of State.<sup>12</sup>

Besides the political benefit Videla would derive from Vance's visit, it is not clear what else the Argentines were promised in Washington. An unsigned assessment of the bilateral talks written approximately one month after they were held considered that "[t]he toughest policy question the U.S. has to face now is how to maintain this momentum and improve bilateral relations while taking cognizance that human rights violations continue to take place here."<sup>13</sup> A heavily excised cable shows that, following Videla's visit, Assistant Secretary Todman wrote to Vance that it was "Time to Support Argentina's Videla." In accordance with that sentiment, in early October 1977, the Department of State quietly approved "export licenses for submarine periscopes and advisory opinions for the sale of three Chinook helicopters and two Lockheed KC-130 tanker aircraft [to Argentina]."<sup>14</sup>

The rationale for Vance's trip to Buenos Aires in November 1977 was laid out in a memo to him just prior to his trip, indicating important issues on the U.S. agenda other than human rights. "[W]e want to strengthen the hand of the Argentine moderates," the memo read, "by

demonstrating that we are deeply interested in events there. We also want to use the visit to move the Argentines on human rights and nuclear proliferation questions.”<sup>15</sup>

Human rights did figure prominently at a November 21 meeting in the Foreign Ministry, between Secretary Vance, U.S. Ambassador to Argentina Raúl Castro, Assistant Secretaries of State Katz, Todman, and Derian, Robert Pastor of the National Security Council and Argentine Foreign Minister Oscar Montes, Deputy Foreign Minister Walter Allara, as well as military officers and other senior representatives of the Argentine diplomatic corps. They discussed such issues as access to prisons by the International Committee of the Red Cross, the publication of lists of prisoners, anti-Semitism, the imprisonment of Argentine journalist and outspoken junta critic Jacobo Timerman, the right of dissidents to opt for exile, and specific human rights cases involving both U.S. and Argentine citizens. Assistant Secretary Todman continued to press for a visit by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights of the Organization of American States. In an unprecedented move, after Vance’s visit, the U.S. delivered to the Argentine government a list of 7,500 disappeared people compiled by different U.S. human rights organizations. By mid-1978, the Embassy had made requests to the foreign minister’s office regarding the whereabouts of more than 1,000 Argentines. The Department of State had interceded for and obtained the liberty of dozens of Argentines.

Several documents report on the various conversations held between the U.S. delegation and its Argentine counterpart, but I found no record of any private conversations between Vance and Videla; similarly, the documents collection contains no minutes of the meeting between Carter and Videla in September. Publicly, a joint communiqué issued on November 21 included two paragraphs stating in general the importance of governments’ protection of the human rights of their citizens and the positive role of the Inter-American Commission on the continent, but the bulk of the 19-paragraph communiqué dealt with nuclear and non-proliferation issues. Curiously absent from the declassified documents is any end-of-year or post-visit assessment of Videla’s compliance with the human rights commitments he made to Carter or Vance during the meetings of late 1977.



***“Does the terror justify the repression?”***

**National Security Advisor for Latin America Robert Pastor,  
September 9, 1978**

In mid-1978 U.S.-Argentine relations dropped to one of their lowest points. The human rights situation had not only failed to improve but continued to deteriorate, as evidenced by the shocking assassination of a group of activists affiliated with the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo by unknown units of the Argentine security forces in December 1977. In response, the U.S. government moved to freeze numerous loans involving hundreds of millions of dollars and to stop negotiations of contracts for previously approved military assistance. This last one was of particular concern to the Argentines, as the congressionally mandated October 1, 1978 deadline for the cut-off of assistance forbade even these contracts using previously-approved funds.

In May 1978, Argentine Ambassador to the United States Jorge A. Aja Espil indirectly blamed the State Department's Human Rights Bureau for an increase in sanctions, complaining to Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher that “[s]ome sectors of the Administration chose not to recognize the progress made by the Argentine Republic in the area of human rights, particularly regarding a series of measures after September 1977: the release of 389 detainees over the Christmas holidays, the re-introduction of the Right of Option, the publications of lists of detainees, the release of Mr. Jacobo Timerman and [his] placement under house arrest; the release of members of the Deutsch family... There are already many licenses that have been ‘frozen’ for more than six months by measures taken by certain sectors of the Department of State... The Argentina Republic has received no official explanation regarding this situation. Quite to the contrary, during conversations held with officers from the Department of State the Embassy was promised on several occasions that the approval of these licenses was imminent.”<sup>16</sup>

Around the time of Aja Espil's note, private negotiations involving the Department of State and the Argentine government intensified. Initially the negotiations—aimed at inducing human rights improvements in exchange for “rewards” such as aid and loans—showed promising signs of advance.<sup>17</sup> But the talks soon deadlocked over the Argentine government's refusal to allow an unconditional inspection by the Inter-American

Commission on Human Rights, a key U.S. demand, and the State Department's denial of EXIM bank credit for a multi-million dollar Argentine hydroelectric dam project (the Yacyretá), a key Argentine request.

When the IACHR informed the State Department in mid-1978 that the Argentine government was refusing to permit an unimpeded visit, Secretary of State Vance withdrew earlier promises to release military training funds and enforced the withholding of the EXIM bank credits for the Yacyretá dam.<sup>18</sup> In August 1978, in testimony before a House subcommittee, Assistant Secretary Derian explained that the decision to withhold EXIM bank loans to Argentina was based on “[t]he systematic use of torture, summary execution of political dissidents, the disappearance and the imprisonment of thousands of individuals without charge, including mothers, churchmen, nuns, labor leaders, journalists, professors and members of human rights organizations, and the failure of the government of Argentina to fulfill its commitment to allow a visit by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.”<sup>19</sup>

Argentine human rights groups were elated by Derian's strong condemnation of abuses by the military. U.S. Embassy political officer “Tex” Harris reported from Buenos Aires that “[t]he human rights organizations here are ecstatic over the EXIM decision and Pat's statement. They have all streamed into my office to express their pleasure and profound thanks. Unfortunately, I was out when the Embassy reaction cable was being drafted and the positive news did not get folded in.”<sup>20</sup> Unaware of simultaneous new secret dealings between the U.S. and Argentine officials starting at this time, Harris also wrote:

“There is some discussion here that EXIM might reconsider its lending policy towards Argentina... This would be a disaster for our human rights efforts here, unless it was coupled with some significant concrete action by the GOA. Softening of EXIM's policy would strengthen the hardliners, demonstrate that the Yankees are only really interested in making a buck, fortify the position of no concessions on human rights, and show we can be shouted down by the local Argentine press. IACHR Visit: The word is out here in press circles of a Videla-Mondale deal to improve bilateral relations via some Argentine gestures on human rights. The deal is said to include extending an invitation to the IACHR to visit Argentina in exchange for US concessions.”<sup>21</sup>

Unbeknownst to Harris and the public, but in accordance with Harris' suspicions, the White House was appalled by the deadlock between the State Department and the Argentines and appears to have decided to take matters into its own hands. On August 9, 1978, in a memo to Carter's National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski, National Security Council Advisor on Latin America Robert Pastor reported:

"The most pressing deadline is October 1, 1978, when the Kennedy-Humphrey amendment prohibiting new arms transfers, and the Roybal amendment, eliminating grant military training to Argentina, come into effect. Both the Argentines and we are eager to take steps which would permit the enormous back-log of credit to be committed before then. (There are over 75 pending FMS cases for \$50 million and \$150 million on the munitions control lists.) There are also funds for military training which are being held up, and which the President noted (on June 29) that he had a "slight" inclination to find an excuse for approving.

Everything is stuck now pending Argentina's reaching agreements with the Inter-American Commission or moving on one of the other objectives above. This basic decision, made in accordance with various legislative requirements, was made by State without consulting NSC... Have we gone too far? Have we pushed our policy beyond its effectiveness? Are we pushing the Argentines over the edge and jeopardizing our future relationship? Does the terror justify the repression?"<sup>22</sup>

In accordance with the White House's desire to move forward and improve bilateral relations, Vice President Walter Mondale and junta chief Videla reached an agreement in September 1978<sup>23</sup> by which the United States would reverse the withholding of EXIM bank credits for the Yacyretá dam and relax its embargo on trade and military sales, in exchange for an Argentine invitation to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights to visit in 1979.

### ***"My futile dissent"***

#### **Political Officer "Tex" Harris, September 13, 1978**

During 1979, a long diplomatic effort by senior U.S. officials to promote human rights in Argentina would be put to the test. Several documents show that the success of that effort was less than clear.<sup>24</sup> On the one hand,

during the first half of 1979, the State Department reported that disappearances had almost stopped and that the visit by the IACHR was on track. On the other hand, the two-week Commission's visit in September 1979 and other limited concessions by the Argentines unleashed a series of tensions within Argentina showing the limited power of President Videla, considered by the U.S. government to be a "moderate," to make lasting human rights improvements. Just before the IACHR's inspection, for example, disappearances picked up dramatically;<sup>25</sup> at the same time, dissension within the U.S. Embassy over human rights policy increased.<sup>26</sup>

One of the most remarkable revelations of the documents from late 1978 to the end of 1979<sup>27</sup> concerns the internal tensions in the U.S. Embassy over the existence of clandestine prisons and clandestine prisoners and their fate; whether all reports on human rights from the Embassy were actually being sent to the Department of State; whether the U.S. ambassador was forceful enough in pressing for human rights improvements; and whether the policy decision to support Videla and the U.S. human rights policy overall were showing signs of success. As Videla drew closer to senior U.S. officials, the fault lines over human rights policy within the U.S. government grew deeper and deeper, pitting the White House, the Latin America bureau of the State Department, and the highest levels of the U.S. Embassy in Buenos Aires against the State Department's human rights bureau and the human rights team based at the Embassy.

A sampling of documents that originated in the U.S. Embassy in Buenos Aires illustrates the growing tensions within the Embassy itself, and reflects disagreements over how to seek and measure human rights improvements. As the State Department attempted in 1978 to establish the credibility of reports of the existence of clandestine detention centers, for example, political officer "Tex" Harris wrote:

"Detention Camps: The Department's request has opened up a rich vein of material here. We have a lot of information regarding interrogation and detention centers scattered throughout our files. I have been pulling it together, trying to develop a format to evaluate and present it sensibly. We are at over 50 facilities and still counting."

"From this desk, the issue posed is whether our strategy of trying to strengthen Videla-Viola, thereby giving them the political power to bring about reforms providing for the protection of the person

should be re-examined in light of their growing weakness to govern. Although my futile dissent message encouraging the US Navy to massage [Navy chief and member of the Argentine junta] Massera got no where, recent events have strengthened my view that we should start putting some of our money on the other horses in the race. Massera is everyone's (but this Embassy's) favorite dark horse.<sup>28</sup>

Then on February 22, 1979, Harris wrote:

"There are several new themes on the human rights front which I have not been able to get out in messages. I have failed twice. If I fail next week, I will have to go out with a dissent message. [1] Shift to [non-terrorist] soft ideological targets...<sup>29</sup> [2] No Drop in Disappearances in 1978...[3] Clandestine Prisoners..."<sup>30</sup>

Harris' memo concluded with a "CC: The Ambassador," a mark of frustration that his reporting was not taken into account by more senior officials.

A week later, Ambassador Raúl Castro wrote a letter to Washington that was defensive in tone, cognizant that information highly critical of the Argentine government was reaching the State Department:

"As you can judge by my cables, I am constantly pressing GOA for improvement in the field of human rights. I'm not offensive or insulting to President Videla. General Viola, [Interior Minister] Harguindeguy, etc. I'm forceful in my approach in the need to improve their stance in the field of human rights. I don't air USG grievances to the media or the public. I very specifically make my approaches to GOA... [A] few days ago I had a call from a U.S. Senator who said he was told by a lower-ranking State Department employee that the Department was mad with me and was replacing me with Frank Ortiz... He also told me that Larry Birns [director of a Washington-based non-governmental organization] had teamed up with a small segment of State Department people and boasted he would get me fired. I didn't realize policy was set by Birns and that he handled personnel. 'Lo que será, sera.'"<sup>31</sup>

Then, within the month, Deputy Chief of Mission Maxwell Chaplin wrote a cable challenging "Tex" Harris's assessment of human rights conditions:

"The thesis that the security apparatus has turned to soft targets originated primarily in some of Tex Harris' conversations with several

security officers who make the Embassy their beat... Since disappearances for the moment seem to be near zero the whole targeting question is moot.”<sup>32</sup>

By the end of 1979, Chaplin renewed the case for rapprochement with the Argentine junta:

“[On the] conclusion that the pragmatic approach to our human rights objectives is ineffective... It was suggested that the US should simply take the high road because our efforts to work with the moderate factions in military regimes have produced modest results ...I believe there would be virtually unanimity that supporting the moderates in Argentina is the only realistic alternative. Who is there to support other than the moderates? The Montoneros or the military hardliners? The existing political parties are not a realistic option in the near term and do not even pretend to be... The “high road” sounds suspiciously like a euphemism for cutting off all relations with the GOA until its behavior suits us better... We have done a number of assessments on the quantitative and qualitative improvements in the GOA’s human rights record in the past year and while the progress has certainly not been fast or far enough, there can be no question that it has been substantial.”<sup>33</sup>

***“[Patt Derian] is our saint, she is our hope!”***  
**Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, April 1979**

The debate over how much, if at all, U.S. policy in the late 1970s contributed to human rights and democratization of Argentina under the military dictatorship will linger for years. Was too little done to save lives and open political spaces? Was too much done? Were the methods appropriate or were there other methods to be applied? What was the proper balance between engagement and sanctioning of a regime that committed well-documented abuses?

U.S. policy evolved, pushed by congressional pressures, from a double message sent under the Ford administration to a significantly more coherent and forceful policy on behalf of human rights under the Carter administration. From 1977 on, the U.S. used public and private channels, as well as sanctions and rewards, to prod the Argentines to respect human rights. The declassified documents would seem to indicate that, for all the inconsisten-

cies and contradictions of U.S. policy, overall the United States made an important contribution to open political spaces for dissent and save lives.

The declassification of the documents themselves is a substantial contribution to the cause of human rights and to mutual U.S.-Argentine understanding. The quality of information found in the State Department documents is remarkable if one compares them to the larger declassifications on El Salvador, Guatemala, and Chile. The Argentine Supreme Court has accepted declassified documents as proof in several cases and has recommended that judges study them for further use. It is my conviction that were it not for the dynamic implementation of human rights policy by U.S. Embassy staffers in Argentina, a collection with such rich information of current relevance would not exist.

In a final note, the declassified documents show that the strong and innovative relationship established by U.S. officials with human rights groups in Argentina no doubt bolstered their morale and may have helped preserve their work, if not the lives of their members. In a remarkable memo, State Department Human Rights officer Patrick Flood reports on his meeting with the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo during a visit to Buenos Aires in April 1979. Flood joined the Mothers at a demonstration, without introducing himself until someone spotted him.

“Pretty soon all 120-150 marchers (including a few men) had surrounded me, everyone talking at once. Some people assumed I was from the IAHRIC, or from the Embassy. I said, ‘No, I am from the Department of State in Washington; I work in the human rights office.’ Some still seemed to have a little trouble placing me, so I said ‘I work with Patricia Derian.’ That did it. Everyone suddenly smiled, repeated your name, said ‘she is our saint, she is our hope,’ and burst into applause.”<sup>34</sup>

This ‘people-to-people’ approach to diplomacy created bonds of understanding, respect, and affection between Americans and Argentines that last until today. In one of my early trips to Buenos Aires in 2001, while presenting the declassified documents before a group of human rights activists, I was explaining what they contained, how they got declassified, and who produced them. I mentioned the name of the political officer in charge of human rights at the U.S. Embassy at the time. One Mother in the audience raised her voice to say she remembered that man. She said, “Nos ayudaba, era un hombre de gran estatura [He helped us, he was a man of great stature].”

## NOTES

1. Some conclusions in this paper draw from ideas and documents in briefing books published earlier by the National Security Archive and CELS: “El Estado Terrorista Desenmascarado,” of October 2001; the “Argentine Military Believed U.S. Gave Go-Ahead for Dirty War,” of August 2003; the “State Department Opens Files On Argentina’s Dirty War,” of August 2003; and the “Argentine Junta Security Forces Killed, Disappeared Activists, Mothers and Nuns,” of December 2003. These publications can be found at [www.nsarchive.org](http://www.nsarchive.org) and [www.cels.org.ar](http://www.cels.org.ar).

2. See “Post Coup Terrorist Activities,” April 6, 1976; “Junta Records on Human Rights to Date,” April 16, 1976; “Junta’s Moderate Line in Doubt,” May 11, 1976.

3. [For further details, see Kathryn Sikkink’s and John Dinges’ contributions in this volume.]

4. “U.S. – Argentine relations,” February 2, 1977.

5. “Human Rights: The Key To Our Relations,” May 4, 1977.

6. Fiscal Year 1978, beginning on October 1, 1977 and ending September 30, 1978. [See also, Arnson, Chapter 8, in this volume.]

7. “U.S.-Argentine Military Relations,” August 1, 1977.

8. “Human Rights Talking Points – Argentina,” September 30, 1977.

9. “Goals Implementation — Argentina,” circa 1977.

10. “Meeting Between Assistant Secretary Todman and President Videla of Argentina,” May 13, 1977; “GOA Official Proposes US-Argentine Dialogue on Human Rights,” June 2, 1977; “Bilateral Talks During UNGA: Argentina – Foreign Minister Oscar Montes,” September 28, 1977.

11. “Argentina’s Political Situation,” circa 1977.

12. The initial agreement was over a list of 3,000 names. Ultimately, two or more lists were handed to the Argentine government, both before and after Vance’s visit, as months passed and the list compiled by human rights groups grew longer. A list delivered to the Argentine government after Vance’s visit contained 7,500 names.

13. “Argentina’s Political Situation,” October 15, 1977.

14. “Meeting with Argentine Deputy Foreign Minister, Navy Captain Gualter Allara,” November 3, 1977.

[While military transfers related to U.S. military assistance programs are handled by the U.S. Department of Defense, the State Department’s Office of Munitions Control issues export licenses to private U.S. companies for the sale of military goods abroad. Ed.]

15. “Bilateral Talks During UNGA: Argentina – Foreign Minister Oscar Montes,” September 28, 1977.

16. “Attack on HA,” May 15, 1978.

17. On May 24, 1978, traveling to Argentina on a discreet mission, Under Secretary of State David Newsom decided to allow a sale of DOD training for the



## The Dirty War's Declassified Documents

Argentine military after Videla promised he would invite the IACHR to Argentina. The move was the first of a series of steps in a give and take designed by the State Department to induce improvements in the human rights practices of the Argentine military, in exchange for releasing EXIM bank credits and relaxing U.S. trade and security aid restrictions. "Argentina Human Rights," May 25, 1978.

18. "Human Rights and U.S. Programs in Argentina," June 26, 1978.

19. U.S. Congress, House, Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on Inter-American Affairs, *Arms Trade in the Western Hemisphere*, August 9, 1978.

20. "Untitled Memo," September 13, 1978.

21. Ibid.

22. National Security Council, "Argentina: Your Questions," August 9, 1979.

23. Mondale and Videla were in Rome attending the coronation of the Pope. The author could find no documents in the Argentina collection on the details of their encounter.

24. See "Current Human Rights Situation In Argentina," July 5, 1979; "Current Human Rights Situation In Argentina," August 1, 1979; "Current Human Rights Situation In Argentina," August 3, 1979.

25. The first in a series of increasing disappearances occurred in May 1979, involving a group of youngsters, followed by a the August disappearance of a larger group of former sympathizers of the extinct extremist Peronist movement FAP, and most dramatically in September when, under Army chief Roberto Viola's orders, Argentine security forces started disappearing Montonero insurgents who were infiltrating Argentina from abroad. "Ambassador's Conversation With Viola, Human Rights Topics," October 1, 1979.

26. The Argentine junta faced an internal political crisis after the IACHR visit and the release of crusading journalist Jacobo Timerman. Several assassination attempts were staged against Ministry of Economy officials, and Montonero insurgents launched an offensive to infiltrate into the country from abroad. The powerful General Menéndez staged a failed coup attempt aimed at deposing Videla. Air Force intelligence officers threatened U.S. Embassy officials. Journalist Robert Cox was expelled from the country. During this period, several changes also took place in the U.S. diplomatic apparatus. Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs Terence Todman left the State Department in late 1978, U.S. Embassy human rights officer "Tex" Harris left the Embassy in mid-1979, and the U.S. Embassy deputy chief of mission left in early 1980. Harris was removed from his post after a dispute with the U.S. Ambassador and the deputy chief of mission over his channeling information to the State Department through unconventional channels.

27. Other than examining the internal conflict in the U.S. Embassy in Argentina during 1979, I have not researched U.S. policy shifts after 1978. However, two documents included in the collection provide a hint of later turning points. In 1980, after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the Carter administration sent a special envoy,

General Andrew Goodpaster, to negotiate Argentine support of the grain embargo against the Soviet Union, in exchange for U.S. military cooperation. See “Your Meeting With General Andrew J. Goodpaster, USA, January 22, 1980, At 3:00 P.M.,” January 22, 1980.

In 1982, during the Reagan administration, Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Thomas Enders visited Argentina, on a trip in which policy objectives other than human rights were paramount. A memo spelling out those objectives read “1) Continued, complementary support in Central America, 2) More support on East-West issues, 3) Continued cooperation in Bolivia, 4) Further human rights improvements...” “Ambassador Enders’ Trip To Argentina And Chile March 6-10, 1982,” undated.

28. Untitled Memo, September 13, 1978.

29. Coinciding with Harris’ reports, in 1980 the Embassy received confirmation from its sources in military intelligence that a unit in Argentine Army Intelligence Battalion 601 was behind the 1979-80 disappearance of non-terrorist PCR [Maoist Communists] and PST [Trotskyite Socialists] militants.

30. Untitled Memo, February 22, 1979.

31. Untitled Letter, February 28, 1979.

32. Untitled Letter, March 28, 1979.

33. Untitled Letter, November 8, 1979.

34. The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, April 18, 1979.

## **"The Impact of the Declassification Project on Bilateral Relations: An Argentine Foreign Policy Perspective"**

**CARLOS SERSALE DI CERISANO**

**T**he Argentina declassification project covering the years 1975–1983 provides ample documentation of the government’s systematic abuse of human rights. In addition, the documents serve as an important source of information about the attitudes of Argentine politicians. The collection also sheds light on the positions of a number of institutions in confronting the constant repression of those years. The documents reveal the tremendous efforts by members of the U.S. Foreign Service, executive branch, Congress, and academia in attempting to save those who were persecuted. This entire declassification effort deserves to be evaluated in a positive light, and represents an important contribution from the United States to Argentina. The following remarks attempt to describe and reflect on 1) the impact of the declassified documents on Argentine foreign policy; and 2) the impact on the bilateral U.S.–Argentine relationship.

### **THE CONTEXT IN WHICH THE DECLASSIFIED DOCUMENTS WERE PRESENTED TO THE GOVERNMENT AND TO CIVIL SOCIETY**

Several of the problems affecting civil society in the year 2002 should be considered, in order to understand the socio-economic and political context in which the documents were released.

- 1) The socio-economic backdrop was as follows: Twenty-one million Argentines out of a total population of 37 million fell under the poverty line. This represents 57 percent of the total population (by contrast, in May 2001, only 36 percent of Argentines were living below the poverty line). Twenty-seven and a half percent of the pop-

- ulation (9.9 million people) were not able to cover basic needs, whereas in May 2001, the total was only 6 percent of the population.
- 2) The Argentine government provided, and still does, subsidies to 2 million heads of households with children under the age of 18. The subsidy is the equivalent of US\$50, which is less than half of what a family of four needs to cover its basic needs. Of this group, only 38 percent of heads of households finished elementary school and only 20 percent completed high school.
  - 3) Argentina produces enough food to feed a population ten times its actual size.
  - 4) Surveys conducted by the United Nations Development Program in 2002 indicate that 62 percent of the population favored democracy as the preferred system of government, while in October 2001 (before the political crisis erupted), support for democracy was only 57 percent.
  - 5) In October 2001, 60 percent of the population believed that, without political parties, it would be impossible to live in a democracy. However, that figure decreased to 47 percent in 2002. There is a tendency to consider all politicians responsible for everything that is wrong. In addition, the general public is indifferent regarding public affairs and has little interest in participating in politics.
  - 6) A number of surveys demonstrate civil society's lack of confidence in all public institutions.

## IMPACT ON FOREIGN POLICY

### *Impact on Inter-American jurisprudence and the doctrines of domestic jurisdiction versus international jurisdiction*

All judicial cases for crimes committed between 1976 and 1983 are virtually paralyzed by laws approved by the Congress during the administration of President Raúl Alfonsín and by a subsequent pardon issued by President Carlos Saúl Menem. In 1986, Congress passed the law of *Punto Final* (Final Stop), establishing a deadline for denunciations of criminal actions. In 1987, the law of *Obediencia Debida* (Due Obedience) established that military officers who carried out the repression were simply following orders, and therefore were not legally accountable for their actions. And presidential pardons issued in 1990 were extended to the

armed forces' chief commanders from 1976 to 1983 and to some terrorist leaders. The only crimes not covered by the pardons were those related to the kidnapping of children of the disappeared. The constitutional status of the laws granting impunity is now under consideration in the Supreme Court of Justice. This follows a decision by an appellate court, the Federal Chamber of Justice, overturning the validity of the laws. If the Supreme Court overturns the laws of *Punto Final* and *Obediencia Debida*, this will signify a change in domestic legislation that will have a tremendous impact on foreign policy.

It is too early to predict whether the documents declassified by the U.S. government will contribute to any modification in Argentine legislation. And thus far, there are no criminal proceedings based on the information provided by the declassified documents.

Another element to consider is the concept of the "right to justice." The doctrine approved by the Inter-American Court of Justice and by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights is very strict regarding the right to justice and, therefore, intolerant of impunity. However, so far, no federal judge has presented material from the declassified documents as new evidence. Consequently, from the perspective of inter-American human rights doctrine, information from the declassified documents did not contribute to enforcing the right to justice. Hence, impunity protecting those responsible for crimes committed in those years still prevails.

***Impact on the bilateral relationship with neighboring countries and other countries (Spain, Italy, France, Germany and Sweden) that have charged members of the Argentine armed forces with crimes***

None of the countries neighboring Argentina has requested information from the files, even though some of the information concerns Operation Condor, which involved intelligence, police, and military coordination between the governments of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay.

Of all the European countries that had presented criminal charges in the last twenty years for the murder of their citizens, and that had requested extradition of members of the military for human rights crimes, none reacted on the basis of information contained in the documents.<sup>1</sup>

***Impact on the formulation of Argentine foreign policy***

Since democracy was reestablished in Argentina in December 1983, human rights have been a priority of the government and a permanent component of Argentine foreign policy. That being said, the declassified documents contributed positively in several aspects.

First, it was important symbolically that the Mothers and Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo, along with Horacio Verbitsky, president of CELS, participated in the press conference given by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Justice. During the press conference, government officials and representatives of non-governmental organizations emphasized the need for full collaboration and their commitment to the search for truth and transparency.

Second, the event was given top priority by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Justice. They briefed President Duhalde on the issue. The Director General of Human Rights in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Secretary of Human Rights in the Ministry of Justice were asked by their respective ministers to serve as custodians of the files, to process the information contained in them, and to make the information available to anyone upon request.

A special unit was set up within the office of the Director General for Human Rights in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with a special allocation of human and material resources, in order to give advice and technical support to students and researchers, provide free access to all who requested information contained in the files, and process the information and conduct additional institutional research on that period. Furthermore, the government acted to distribute the information immediately to the press and made the files available electronically to all judges and to the Supreme Court of Justice.

How did the release of declassified documents influence political platforms on foreign policy for the presidential elections in April 2003? All United Nations and Inter-American treaties, conventions, protocols and related instruments are included in the national constitution. Therefore, all political parties include human rights as a priority in their political platforms. However, some candidates were more sensitive than others on human rights issues. Candidate (now President) Néstor Kirchner (*Partido Justicialista*) and candidate Elisa Carrió (*Argentina por una República de Iguales*, ARI) highlighted human rights as a key issue for the bilateral relationship with the United States.

***Impact on the work of the office of Director General of Human Rights in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs:***

The release of the documents elicited only a limited response from Argentine civil society and some branches of government. There were no requests for the documents from judges, non-governmental organizations (with the exception of the human rights groups mentioned earlier), labor unions, or researchers and historians.

The press gave some, albeit limited coverage. The day after the press conference on August 20, 2002, all of Argentina's newspapers devoted coverage to the release. Some covered the event on the front page and some requested interviews with the Director General for Human Rights. By the following Sunday, only three national newspapers published an analysis of the subject.<sup>2</sup> Investigations by prestigious journalists identified some influential members from major political parties who, during the years 1976-77, expressed support for the repression carried out by the military government. The declassification project includes very detailed information about the position of several experienced and well-known politicians. Some of them endorsed what was happening, justifying it as inevitable, and in some cases supported what the *Junta Militar* was doing in terms of human rights. To say the least, the information contained in the declassified documents was not of interest to them.

There was little reaction by the public to the revelations contained in the documents.

The reaction in the legislature was similarly subdued. During Senate consideration of the promotion of two army officers, a senator requested background information about their possible involvement in criminal cases. Although neither of the officers was mentioned in the declassified files, one of them in the end was not promoted.

**IMPACT ON THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP**

The government viewed the release of the documents as a positive contribution to improving the quality of Argentine democracy. Specifically, the release provided a way of remembering the Argentine holocaust as well as the implications of living without democratic institutions.

One of the two cabinet ministers who participated in the release of the documents, Minister of Foreign Affairs Carlos Ruckauf, focused on

transparency and the need for survivors and families of the disappeared to find the truth about who was directly responsible for the crimes that affected them. “Given that the documents were classified, I would imagine that some information will come to light that was previously unknown. During those years, a lot of information was passed between the U.S. Embassy in Buenos Aires and the Department of State. Surely it will be possible to learn the names of people involved in those acts,” Ruckauf said.

Minister of Justice Juan José Álvarez, stated that “the material will be very useful in some of the judicial proceedings currently underway.” He called the release “a transcendental act” involving the most painful period Argentines had lived through. “This is a step forward,” he said, adding that “this information is going to be very helpful.”<sup>3</sup>

In the specific area of human rights, cooperation between the U.S. and Argentine governments qualitatively improved, and is reflected in a richer exchange of information in all related areas. Argentina and the United States have already established a process of consultation and coordination on all human rights issues that are part of the United Nations agenda. There is also thorough and transparent cooperation in the preparation of the U.S. State Department’s annual report on human rights in Argentina.

A more subjective evaluation touches on moral issues. The release of the documents was valuable in terms of supporting democracy, promoting truth, and contributing to the memory of new generations.

The timing of the release was important to the support of democratic institutions. The second half of 2002 was very negative in the eyes of civil society, a period characterized by the public’s lack of confidence in government, political parties, and all types of leadership (with the exception of the Catholic Church); by a highly regressive distribution of income; by 25 percent unemployment; and by the worst situation of human security ever known by the Argentine people. Public opinion polls taken at the time illustrate that, although democracy as a system was not questioned (a situation that has developed in other Latin American countries), the political environment offered opportunities for chaos and anarchy. In this context, reminding the Argentine people of the suffering of living under a military dictatorship was clearly a contribution to democratic consolidation.



Historically speaking, the declassified documents do not add much to what specialists already knew about the period or about the positions taken by the U.S. government in those years. However, virtually unknown to the public were the tremendous and courageous efforts made by a handful of U.S. diplomats to assist the families of the victims and to do whatever was possible to save lives. Another new element for historians concerns U.S. opposition, on human rights grounds, to loans to the Argentine government by the IDB, World Bank and IMF. These are issues that warrant further research by specialists in bilateral relations.

### FINAL OBSERVATIONS

The release of the declassified documents was a positive and timely contribution to the consolidation of Argentine democracy. It helped establish human rights as a foreign policy priority, and strengthened the U.S.-Argentine bilateral relationship. In addition, information in the documents helped civil society in reassessing the attitudes of certain Argentine politicians *vis-à-vis* the military government of that time. The documents speak for themselves, and it is to be hoped that the local media would continue to demonstrate interest in their dissemination.

Although ordinary citizens did not pay much attention to the release, the government and human rights NGO's welcomed the initiative. To the extent that there was limited debate, it was in the context of a depressed socio-economic situation coupled with a lack of confidence, trust, and interest in all issues related to politics. Overall, the declassified documents did not contribute much to the right to justice thus far, although it is possible that that will change in the future.

Nonetheless, reviving the memory of the Argentine holocaust will not only help consolidate Argentina's democracy but also the ones of all neighboring countries. For a still fragile democracy like Argentina's, reminding the people, the government, and the armed forces of the dangers of military involvement in domestic security issues provides a warning not to repeat the same mistake. This reminder constitutes, without a doubt, the principal significance of the declassified documents for this and future generations.

## NOTES

1. Earlier, Israel had investigated the disappearances of Argentine Jews, in order to prepare a report based on the work of a commission formed by members from the Argentine government (the Ministry of Foreign Affairs), the parliament, the judiciary, and members of academia. The commission visited Argentina in September 2001 and received strong support from the government of Argentina. The commission issued its report at the end of 2002.

2. During the remainder of 2002, only one newspaper periodically published related editorials.

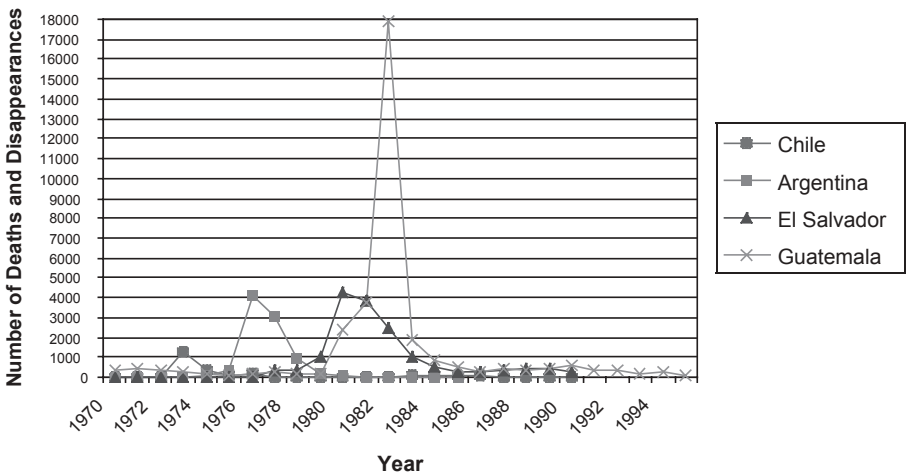
3. Both the Ruckauf and Álvarez quotes are from “EE.UU entregó papeles secretos de los años ’70,” *Ámbito Financiero*, August 21, 2002.

## CHAPTER 3

KATHRYN SIKKINK

For many years I have been studying the connection between U.S. policy and the observance of human rights in Latin America. I have just completed a book manuscript that looks at U.S. policy towards Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Guatemala, and El Salvador from 1973-2000. In order to speak seriously about that number of countries over a long period of time, I look at “critical junctures” of repression and at what the U.S. government was doing during that period and immediately preceding it. The chart below illustrates what I mean by “critical junctures.”

**Figure 1: State Sponsored Deaths and Disappearances:  
1970-1995**



The chart contains estimates of deaths and disappearances in four countries—Chile, Argentina, El Salvador, and Guatemala—and statistics are drawn from the truth commissions in each of those four countries. The figures are useful in identifying trends rather than absolute numbers. One

pattern is obvious: that the magnitude of the repression in Guatemala dwarfs what took place in other countries. Another pattern that emerges is that each country experienced severe peaks of repression that last about two or three years, followed by lower, albeit serious levels of deaths and disappearances. The graph also illustrates that the bulk of repression in the region took place over a decade, beginning with the military coup in Chile in September 1973 and lasting through 1983, with the end of genocide in Guatemala. I do not use the term genocide casually at all. It is the term used by Guatemala's Historical Clarification Commission to describe the systematic killing of the indigenous population.

In each of these two- or three-year periods, and particularly at the beginning of the peak, I explore what the United States was doing in each country. I assume that repression is a choice that governments make in the context of ideologies. In Latin America, national security doctrine is the crucial ideology that influences choices about repression. But the choice is also made in a context of perceptions of costs and benefits. The United States is crucial because it influences ideology, especially national security doctrine, and also because it influences perceptions of the costs and benefits of repression.

When I read the declassified documents, I did not discover much that surprised me about the Carter period. There was a wealth of details, as well as some new evidence, but nothing that would lead me to change my previous interpretation of the period. I did, however, discover new material about the period that I think was *the* "critical juncture" in Argentina: the year 1976, the first year of the dictatorship and the last year of the Ford administration, when Robert Hill served as U.S. Ambassador to Argentina and Henry Kissinger served as U.S. Secretary of State. I must add that I'm not surprised that the documents have not had a bigger impact. In fact, they are very difficult to read. In order to make sense of the documents, one has to have followed this period quite closely. And even if one followed it closely, reading the documents is still an interpretative exercise.

The first surprise that emerges from the documents covering the Ford period concerns Ambassador Hill's activity. He was doing more on the issue of human rights than I had thought he was doing and that I thought the U.S. Embassy was doing under the Kissinger State Department. We tend to associate human rights policy with the Carter administration, but

there were earlier indications of it in Argentina. Specifically, Ambassador Hill issued a *démarche* in May 1976, two months after the coup, in which he makes a clear and firm announcement of the U.S. government's concerns about human rights. He says:

“We fully understand that Argentina is involved in an all-out struggle against subversion. There are, however, some norms which can never be put aside by governments dedicated to a rule of law. Respect for human rights is one of these.”<sup>1</sup>

Frankly, I would be very happy to see President Bush make that exact statement today. It has not been made by high-level officials in this administration in a different, but in certain respects, oddly similar context.

The second surprising issue emerging from the documents is how dramatically Secretary of State Kissinger and other high-level members of the Ford administration undermined the efforts by the U.S. Embassy to express concern about human rights. Kissinger, Vice President Nelson Rockefeller, and other top officials gave a clear “green light” to repression in Argentina, urging military leaders to continue and in fact accelerate the war against subversion. They make no mention of the methods being used by the military: torture, disappearance, executions.

What do I mean by a “green light?” The chronology here is key, especially in identifying a “critical juncture.” On June 10, 1976, Kissinger met with Foreign Minister César Augusto Guzzetti in Santiago. We do not have documents from that meeting, but we can piece together what happened: in later conversations with U.S. diplomats that are reported in subsequent cables to Washington, Argentine officials made frequent references to the Kissinger–Guzzetti meeting. These later accounts indicate that Kissinger did not offer Guzzetti specific instructions or guidelines. Rather, he is reported to have said that he “hoped the Argentine government would get the terrorism problem under control as quickly as possible.”<sup>2</sup>

Guzzetti told Ambassador Hill that he had reported his conversation with Kissinger to President Jorge Videla and to the cabinet and “that their impression had been that USG’s [U.S. government’s] overriding concern was not with human rights but rather that the GOA [government of Argentina] get it over quickly.”<sup>3</sup>

Just one week after Guzzetti’s meeting with Kissinger, on June 16, 1976, the deputy chief of mission (DCM) of the U.S. Embassy met with the top civilian official of the Argentine foreign ministry. When the

deputy chief of mission expressed his concern about human rights, the Argentine official responded by expressing his satisfaction that Secretary Kissinger was “realistic and understood the GOA’s problems.”<sup>4</sup> In a cable summarizing the meeting, the deputy chief of mission reported that the official was “not disposed to give one inch on the issue of human rights.”<sup>5</sup>

In September 1976, Ambassador Hill met with President Videla and again expressed his concern with the human rights situation. Videla reiterated that he had the impression that “senior officers of the U.S. government understand the situation his government faces but junior bureaucrats do not.”<sup>6</sup> The insult here is quite clear: Videla is categorizing the ambassador to his country as a junior officer who doesn’t understand him, but says that the secretary of state and others do. Ambassador Hill tried to insist in this meeting that the Argentines have misinterpreted and misunderstood Kissinger. But one month later, in October 1976, Guzzetti traveled to Washington, D.C. and returned “euphoric.” In his meetings, Vice President Rockefeller, Kissinger, and other high level officials had stressed once again that Argentina should “get the terrorist problem over as soon as possible.” Apparently, no one raised human rights issues, and Kissinger told him that “serious problems could be avoided in the U.S....if the terrorist problem was over by December or January.”<sup>7</sup> So there is no question that Guzzetti interpreted Kissinger correctly. At this point, Hill wrote a strong cable reporting on Guzzetti’s euphoria, concluding that “it will be unrealistic and unbelievable for this embassy to press...human rights” in the current climate.<sup>8</sup>

This sequence of documents from mid- to late 1976 constitutes, in my view, the most important and surprising in the entire collection.

In considering this chronology, it is important to consider what was going on in Argentina at this time. According to a monthly breakdown of human rights data, the number of deaths and disappearances peaked at precisely the time of the Kissinger “green light,” between June 1976 and January 1977. That is, the most intense repression in Argentina coincides exactly with the period in which senior U.S. officials are saying that human rights don’t matter.

It is very difficult to find “smoking guns” with respect to U.S. human rights policy. But it seems me this is the closest we can come to saying that U.S. policymakers bear an important responsibility for the peak of repression in Argentina.

What is the relevance of this information for current U.S.-Argentine relations? Having spent four months in Argentina in late 2002 conducting research on current human rights trials, I became convinced that the United States and Argentina have reversed roles on international human rights issues. Argentina is more of a leader and a protagonist on human rights issues globally, and the United States is now lagging behind. Argentina is one of five countries that played a crucial role in the formation of the International Criminal Court, and the United States was one of the Court's principal opponents. Argentina's leadership on the issue of international human rights, contrary to what was said earlier, serves as an example of a principled and independent foreign policy. In addition, there are quite innovative human rights cases moving ahead in Argentine courts and supported by CELS and other groups. A recent judgment by an appeals court declared Argentina's amnesty laws unconstitutional. Thus, Argentina has begun to take a much more activist domestic and global role regarding human rights, whereas the United States is falling behind on this issue. This is particularly relevant for U.S. relations with other countries in the world, where the issue of human rights violations in the context of wars on terrorism is still *the* current issue.

The main conclusion to draw is that the United States can contribute to improving human rights, as I have argued it did during the Carter administration,<sup>9</sup> or it can contribute to worsening them, as it did during 1976. The content of policy discussion matters. What senior officials say, what verbal signals and cues are given, are central. Cutting aid and other forms of sanctions and conditionalities are important, but principally as an extension of forceful verbal signals and cues. U.S. foreign policy towards Argentina during a "critical juncture" illustrates that "green lights"—the message to fight terrorism and do it quickly—can have very negative effects, and are particularly objectionable in that the U.S. government was well aware of massive violations of human rights at the time. This event of a generation ago is emblematic of some of the worst errors the United States made repeatedly during the Cold War, and has key implications for policymakers today. There is reason to believe that "green lights" are again being issued in the context of the new war against terrorism. I fear that they could have effects as pernicious as those in Argentina in 1976.

**JOHN DINGES:** The set of documents on the exchange between Hill, Kissinger, and Guzzetti is the single most important set of revelations

about U.S. foreign policy contained in the Argentina documents, in my opinion. As a footnote, I want to add that in 1987, journalist Martin Andersen wrote an article in *The Nation* magazine, based on memos that he had received from Carter's former Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights, Patricia Derian. Derian had spoken to Ambassador Hill, and he complained bitterly about having been undermined by Secretary of State Kissinger, in Kissinger's meeting with Guzzetti in Chile—one of the events described by Kathryn Sikkink. The content of Andersen's article was strenuously denied by former Assistant Secretary of State William Rogers, speaking for Secretary Kissinger. It is important to remember that Andersen wrote his article in 1987. Rogers denied on Kissinger's behalf that any of these exchanges, any of the Guzzetti-Hill-Kissinger exchange, had taken place; he said there were no cables, that Hill never reported the exchanges to Washington, and that therefore, the episode did not exist. That, we now know, was untrue. We have the cables that prove what happened. I hesitate to accuse Rogers of deception, but it is hard to imagine an innocent explanation for such a denial by a former assistant secretary, who has had access to the classified record denied to all of us over all these years. On the substance of the issue—the evidence that Kissinger did, in fact, give a green light to Argentina's mass repression—the documents present a rare example of catching U.S. officials red-handed.

## NOTES

1. U.S. Embassy, May 25, 1976, Document #1976 Buenos03462.
2. U.S. Embassy, September 20, 1976, Document #1976 Buenos06130.
3. Ibid.
4. U.S. Embassy, June 16, 1976, Document #1976 Buenos03985.
5. Ibid.
6. U.S. Embassy, September 24, 1976, Document #1976 06276.
7. U.S. Embassy, October 19, 1976, Document #1976 Buenos06871.
8. Ibid.
9. See Kathryn Sikkink, "The Effectiveness of U.S. Human Rights Policy 1973–1980," in Laurence Whitehead, ed., *The International Dimensions of Democratization: Europe and the Americas* (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 93–124.



## CHAPTER 4

F.A. “TEX” HARRIS

This enormous release of documents and the stories they tell deal principally with three major issues.

The first issue is the battle between homeland security and individual rights. The Argentine holocaust is a clear example of the things one should not do to protect homeland security. These lessons need to be widely learned. Unfortunately, these lessons are often forgotten.

The second issue that the documents shed light upon is the role of human rights in the making of foreign policy. There was at this time within the Carter administration a major struggle between the traditional anti-communist national security doctrine and the new human rights policy. Senior officers of the Argentine military believed they were responsible for spearheading the fight against “godless communism,” which they saw as an attack against the entire Western world. It was as if World War III was somehow taking place on their doorstep. The Argentine military leadership saw its responsibility not only as protecting Argentina, but also protecting Western civilization from the ravages of communism. This view of a worldwide struggle was ingrained in the Argentine officer corps from the time they were cadets in their military academies. They saw fighting communism as both their Christian and highest military duty.

At the same time that the Argentine military was adopting a new hard-line national security doctrine based on kidnapping, torture, and clandestine executions, the United States elected as president a peanut farmer from Georgia named Jimmy Carter. One of Carter’s campaign advisers, Richard Holbrooke, states that he brought the human rights agenda into the Carter campaign. Holbrooke claimed to have crafted the policy for candidate Carter from the foreign policy debate at the time, that American foreign policy was unbalanced and mono-focal on anti-communism and needed to deal with nations on other issues, such as their human rights records.

But the real heroes in this effort to change policy were in the United States Congress. A few members on Congress, supported by dedicated

staff members and helped by a new breed of non-governmental organizations and church groups, began to write legislation mandating that human rights be a key component of American diplomacy.

These policy strands came together with the election of Jimmy Carter to the presidency. A new area of diplomacy was created. U.S. foreign policy would in the future take into account, in its relationship, with other nations, how that nation treated its own citizens.

The conflict between the United States and Argentina was the clash of these two conflicting world visions. On the one hand, the new Argentine military regime was convinced that its national security was threatened by an external force so powerful that it also threatened the very foundations of Western civilization. The Argentine junta adopted an action program to fight that threat based on military doctrine used by the French in its colonies in Algeria and Vietnam, of clandestine disappearances, torture for information, and summary executions.

On the other hand was the growing view, not just in the United States, but also in Europe and elsewhere, that human rights had to be a critical component in the practice of diplomacy. Until this time, diplomats did not use the "t" word—torture; they didn't use the "k" word—killing. In general, how governments treated their own citizens was considered to be strictly an internal matter, and nobody else's business. That changed due to the reaction to the horrible abuses in Argentina. Argentina was the hard case that was the most important factor in imbedding human rights into United State foreign policy.

A third issue raised by the documents concerns the policy struggles within the U.S. government and, to a certain extent, within the government of Argentina.

I have never worked as a miner; but my job in life has been mining data. I collected data from thousands of brave people in Argentina who came to this great big, fortified Embassy to report the disappearances of their loved ones. We recorded their testimonies and compiled an internal database in the Embassy, which was, I have learned subsequently, a unique diplomatic effort. The release of these Embassy files provides an enormous amount of information about the disappeared.

When the Department of State put the documents on its website, within two or three days it received 750,000 "hits." The main website for the Department of State, which contains travel advisory data, speeches by

Secretary of State Colin Powell, and policy statements, receives only about 200,000 “hits” per month. Where did the three quarters of a million hits come from? Clearly from the families and friends of the twenty-two thousand disappeared who were searching the records. As our efforts in the late 1970s became accessible, thousands of people could search the State Department’s website and find the names and some information about their missing relatives.

I would like to share a story that gives a “worm’s eye view” of the policy decision-making process. One Friday in 1978 I was having a sandwich for lunch at my desk in the Embassy. At the time, the U.S. government was considering a multi-million dollar loan guarantee from the U.S. government’s Export-Import Bank to a U.S. company named Aliss-Chalmers, to build a turbine factory in Argentina which it would turn over when completed to a company in Buenos Aires called *Astilleros Argentina*, Argentine Shipyards. As this was a major EXIM loan, I went down to the Embassy’s economic/commercial section during my lunch hour, and I asked the secretary there if I could borrow the file. She said “sure,” and “just be sure you don’t lose anything.” So I took the file back to my desk in a windowless office and I sat there eating my sandwich and thumbing through the file.

All of a sudden I came upon a document, an internal Embassy memorandum of a conversation, which indicated that *Astilleros Argentina* was a wholly owned subsidiary of the Argentine Navy! Now, somehow the United States Embassy in Buenos Aires had forgotten to report that little fact back to Washington. So I closed the file, finished my sandwich, and returned the file to the secretary. Then I wrote a letter in accordance with special rules that had been negotiated between the State Department and the Embassy, allowing me to report to the Department by letter any human rights information that the Embassy did not want to submit through official channels. I was to send one letter to the Argentine desk officer in the Latin America Bureau (ARA), another to the human rights officer in Patt Derian’s human rights bureau (HR/HA), and I was to give a copy to the ambassador for his information.

In my letter about the EXIM loan, I simply asked, “Did you know that the beneficiary of the EXIM loan in Argentina was the Argentine Navy?” The Argentine Navy was thrilled by the prospect of the loan, because it was going to have a half billion dollar, world-class industrial manufactur-

ing facility to produce turbines that sold for millions of dollars a piece. There would be a new industry owned by the Navy. The Argentine Army, by contrast, produced underwear and socks and low technology things, but the Navy was going to make large hydroelectric turbines and become a world-class player, because there were only three or four producers of these large hydroelectric turbines in the world.

I delivered the letters to the Department to the pouch room, where they would be sent to Washington that evening by sealed diplomatic pouch, and dropped the ambassador's copy at his office. Late that afternoon, my boss, the political counselor, came to my office and handed me back the two letters that I sent to Washington and talked to me about how I had to be a team player. The deputy chief of mission (the ambassador was away) had made a decision that this information about the true beneficiary of the EXIM loan should not go to Washington. We talked for forty minutes and as he left, he said, "at least you won't get it in the pouch of this week." I did not know then that the meeting in Washington to decide on the EXIM loan was going to take place that coming Tuesday, but the DCM did.

I went to the pouch room and, after a tough negotiation, convinced the clerk to put my letters back into the diplomatic pouch, which by that time had been sealed with large wax seals. The clerk had to cut open the seals and redo them, and he could have told me to 'take a walk,' but he didn't. He put the letters back in.

Of course, when the letters reached Washington, all hell broke loose. The EXIM loan was stopped. It was a major project costing about four hundred million dollars that was critical to Aliss-Chalmers and meant thousands of jobs in Pennsylvania. The U.S. business community, the Departments of Commerce and Treasury were furious because they saw that the Carter human rights policy was costing American exports and American jobs. Meanwhile, back in Argentina, the Argentine Navy went crazy because its future "cash cow" was going to be undercut by a decision of the U.S. government not to extend the EXIM guarantees. Without the EXIM guarantees, Aliss-Chalmers wouldn't touch the project with a twenty foot pole. The Congress held hearings. Most importantly, the EXIM loan became the centerpiece of negotiations between Vice President Mondale and the Argentine junta chief Videla during which a visit of the OAS Inter-American Commission on Human Rights

was traded for approval of the EXIM loan. The EXIM loan was eventually approved, but the plant was not built. At an Argentine cabinet meeting, the then-finance minister, Martínez de Hoz, was reported to have said, “Thank God for the U.S. human rights policy. It has saved Argentina from another white elephant industrial project.”

The final twist to this story is that the commercial counselor in the U.S. Embassy was so infuriated about the whole episode that he resigned from the Foreign Service and went to work for Aliss-Chalmers as their representative in Paraguay. Aliss-Chalmers eventually supplied the hydroelectric turbines for the Yacyretá dam, but they were built in Pennsylvania, not in Argentina.

This “worm’s eye view” of the story shows just how serendipitous policy decisions can be. I had a little time at lunch one day and went down to ask for a file, and I’m sure that had the commercial officer been there I would not have gotten that file. But the secretary did give it to me, and the rest is history.



## Discussion

**JOHN DINGES:** I have been doing research on the Southern Cone for many years. And I'm currently working on a book on Operation Condor which draws both from the collection of declassified documents on Chile, and from this very valuable collection on Argentina. I wish, briefly, to highlight two conclusions.

First, that the documents provide a view from the inside, not only of the Embassy but also of the intelligence community, in that there are some important intelligence documents. What is surprising is that the full extent of human rights violations is not reflected in the documents. In other words, whereas the "green light" given by U.S. officials to human rights abuses was unquestionable, the U.S. Embassy at the time knew about only approximately one tenth of the human rights violations taking place. They knew about what was going on in the streets—bodies being found, for example. But in 1976 they did not know about the 4,000 disappeared during that year, and they did not know that almost a thousand people had been *chupados*, "sucked up" by the military even before the 1976 military coup. This lack of knowledge is important for our historical evaluation of this period.

Second, I believe that human rights policy by the United States government was ineffective under both the Ford and Carter administrations. It was ineffective in the Ford-Kissinger period, because of two-handed, dual morality. Kissinger was giving a "green light" in private meetings, even while the ambassador was trying to give a "red light" in his cautionary notes and *démarches* delivered to the Argentine military government. The bottom line was that human rights policy was virtually one hundred percent ineffective. But even during the Carter administration, the effect of the newly vigorous human rights policy was long in coming: human rights violations in Argentina during 1977-78 (the first years of Carter) were in the realm of 2,000-3,000 disappeared. In other words, the system of massive repression continued.

**CYNTHIA ARNISON, WOODROW WILSON CENTER:** Tex Harris described a fortuitous discovery on his part of a particular episode, and also described the way the ambassador tried to suppress his reporting. Mr. Harris, could you give us more detail, during the period in which you were in the Embassy, of the latitude for collecting information and reporting the information to Washington? Was there a change during the time that you were there? In other words, was there a point at which Washington simply did not want to know?

**TEX HARRIS:** It wasn't that Washington didn't want to know. *Some* people in Washington very much wanted to know the details of what was going on in Argentina and other people in the Embassy didn't want to tell them. That was the battle.

There was a major change in the reporting ground rules, from expansive to very limited, during my tour.

I went to Argentina not as the internal affairs officer but as the external affairs officer. I was to deal with such external issues as the Malvinas Islands and Beagle Channel disputes, nuclear non-proliferation, and Argentine votes in the United Nations. A fine officer, a young woman, was filling the internal affairs position, but was very uncomfortable with the job. Our boss, the political counselor, asked me to switch jobs. I said that I would change, but on one condition: that the Embassy open up its doors and allow Argentine citizens to enter and report human rights violations to me so I would know what the hell was going on. Having that first-hand input was the only way I could do the job. The ambassador, DCM, and political counselor all agreed. As a result, every day, between two and four o'clock, the doors of the Embassy opened up and people came by the scores and reported the losses of their loved ones.

I had two small offices for interviewing inside the Embassy and a wonderful Argentine-Swiss woman helping me in an efficient interviewing process. My assistant brought a visitor into the first office and wrote down his/her name and address and the name of the disappeared relative or friend on a 5 by 8 inch file card. I then came in and got the full details of the disappearance, as well as the political background of the missing person. I then thanked them for coming to the Embassy, and in cases where there was a U.S. tie, offered to have the Embassy intervene with the Argentine authorities. I then excused myself and went directly into the



second office for the next interview, while my assistant escorted a new visitor into the first office. With this “dentist’s office” system in place, we could really move people through and collect information efficiently.

In the beginning, the Embassy got *kudos* from Washington. The Carter administration policy was to support human rights and Washington was getting a dramatic, direct, real time sample of the human rights violations in Argentina that was unique in Embassy reporting. We were producing weekly “temperature charts,” as we called them, like the one Kathryn Sikkink displayed earlier, showing to Washington a graphic depiction of the repression, based on what the people who came in to the Embassy told us. No one else in the world was doing that, so we became a model, and the ambassador was receiving congratulations for this great reporting.

Then the problems began. The first issue was over the sale of pilot helmets. The United States had sold fighter-bombers to the Argentine Navy for its aircraft carriers and the Argentine Navy wanted to upgrade the integrated radio transmitter crash helmets used by the pilots. The newer models had microphones that were voice activated so that the pilot could speak and transmit without having to press a send button. The pilot could just say, “This is Roger, I’m on your left wing,” and it would be transmitted. The ambassador supported the sale of the upgraded helmets in a first person message to Washington. Whatever his arguments, he was turned down. The reason he was turned down was that the Embassy’s human rights reports—the “temperature charts”—and the detailed information we had been sending to Washington showed a horrible human rights record and placed responsibility for many of the violations on the Argentine Navy. Consequently, policymakers in Washington were not sympathetic to providing anything to the Argentine Navy, despite the ambassador’s recommendation.

This rejection of the ambassador’s recommendation to provide helmets to the Argentine Navy led to a dramatic policy change inside the Embassy towards human rights reporting. Ambassador Raúl Castro<sup>1</sup> stopped me in the Embassy hallway and said, “God damn it, Harris...this is crap.” He emphasized that this was his third embassy and that he was personally responsible to the president of the United States for making sure that U.S. actions in Argentina were in the best interests of the United States. Castro said that he knew what was happening on the ground in Argentina and that his judgment should control U.S. policy.

The ambassador said, “that’s not happening and it’s because of your reporting, and we’ve got to change that.”

So that was the fight. From the ambassador’s perspective it wasn’t a fight over policy; it was a fight over who controlled U.S. policy towards Argentina. It was a fight over “who is in charge.”

The fight wasn’t over the bigger question of whether promoting human rights was in the long-term national interest of the United States. That question had already begun to be answered in Washington. There, a new human rights policy was being promoted and a new bureau established to advance that policy, led by Assistant Secretary Patt Derian, a very skillful, tough, articulate lady. Derian had begun to sit at the decision making table at State and argue for different policies based on a nation’s human rights record. The Embassy was a key provider of information on Argentina; but no longer the key policy maker.

**JOSEPH S. TULCHIN, WOODROW WILSON CENTER:** I, too, was in Argentina in the 1970s, and I had the pleasure of talking to Mr. Harris and a number of his colleagues. I would like to make three points. First, to underscore what John Dinges said, all three branches of the Argentine military had begun killing opponents before the 1976 coup. The numbers were in the hundreds, as Kathryn Sikkink’s graph indicates, not the thousands or tens of thousands, but the apparatus that was unleashed after the coup was entirely in place beforehand. The so-called “dirty war” involved the state through the proxy of the armed forces. And each of the three armed forces had its own repressive apparatus, and the three were not always in agreement. Two good friends of mine made it into exile and were not killed, either because they had friends in one of the three branches, and as a favor—*una ganchada*—given 48 hours to leave the country, despite the fact that they had been listed for extermination, or because one of the forces refused to vote for elimination. This was happening well before the coup.

The second point is that the bureaucratic politics of U.S. foreign policy, and to a lesser extent Argentine policy, is extremely important. In the Argentine case, the armed forces were never entirely in agreement—thank God, or that graph would have had a peak thousands and thousands higher. The armed forces literally had weekly meetings to decide who was to be killed next, and if there was disagreement, generally they decided to let

the person live and to move on to the next case. Several times there was serious disagreement. For example, the assistant editor of *Confirmado* was killed on the streets right around the corner from my apartment. The Army wanted him eliminated. And, although the Navy vetoed it, the Army was so angry about that veto that it went out and killed him anyway.

The bureaucratic politics on the U.S. side were critical in this period. Tex Harris was a master of back-channel communications. It's not just that he was able to get a file at lunch time; it was knowing how to deal with people, knowing the guy who puts the wax seals on the bag, for example. What also matters is the source of opposition. Fortunately, in the United States, even when the balance shifted markedly against human rights as an important element in foreign policy, there are those close enough to the decision making process who disagree and are able to express their opinions, whether or not they are NGOs. In recent years, Peru was an excellent example of a case in which an NGO—the Washington Office on Latin America—was able to actually move U.S. policy. The role of Congress is always critical. Not everybody in Congress is going to agree with the central tendency of the administration's policy. The key is how to gain access to those you know and continue pressuring them.

My final point concerns the unhappy balance in U.S. foreign policy between principles, in this case human rights, and national security doctrine. This is a “must study” subject. A recent book on the Kennedy administration makes clear that when a critical decision was made during the Cold War, the United States almost always subordinated concerns for democracy and human rights to the stated concern for and identification with national security doctrine.<sup>2</sup> Is that happening today? It appears to be going in that direction. But we should not turn anthropomorphic in our analysis of U.S. foreign policy. The United States may be a hegemonic power, but it is not omnipotent. I would ask Kathryn Sikkink to review the last phrase about U.S. responsibility for the killings in Argentina. The United States bears some responsibility, but in this case the Argentines aimed the guns and flew the helicopters. The “green light” may have let the Argentines go ahead; but they couldn't have gone ahead if the killing apparatus hadn't already been in place. U.S. foreign policy bears some responsibility for many things, but it has to share responsibility with Argentina and Argentines.

**KATHRYN SIKKINK:** That is true without a doubt, and I didn't have the slightest intention of suggesting otherwise. But what would have happened in 1976 if Kissinger had sent a very clear message saying 'no, we are not committed to the struggle against subversion by any means? We are opposed to that. We want to see the struggle against subversion within the rule of law.' I think you have misinterpreted my argument. I never said that the whole pattern of repression that is illustrated in the charts was the responsibility of the United States; rather, it's the peak, and I think that we do need to think about our responsibility. Of course the repression is not mono-causal. And I specifically distinguished between the actions of Ambassador Hill and Henry Kissinger. I think Henry Kissinger and some top-level people do bear responsibility for the peak of repression, but not the whole policy apparatus.

**TEX HARRIS:** I would like to add to the point Joe Tulchin made about human rights and U.S. foreign policy. The current Bush administration has been criticized, especially abroad, for its position on the International Criminal Court and on other human rights matters, but things had changed even during the Clinton administration. I once asked Thomas Pickering, Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs in the Clinton administration, what he considered to be the major successes of the Clinton administration in foreign affairs. One of the things he noted sticks in my mind. Pickering said, "Tex, what we did was put human rights policy back into its proper policy perspective." This was seen by the Clinton national security leaders as a clear accomplishment. The major human rights issue was, of course, China, where an annual congressional debate took place between advocates of human rights and advocates of business interests.

What has happened over time is that foreign affairs decisions (and human rights issues) are, in the main, not made in the Department of State. They are made in the White House, because there are critical domestic political considerations that need to be factored in. Cuba policy is made with the politics of South Florida and northern New Jersey in mind. U.S. policy towards Myanmar is controlled by the State Department, as there are few domestic political considerations.

In the second Clinton administration, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright had control over United States relations with Myanmar. But she didn't have that authority over Kosovo, over Cuba, over Argentina, or

many other countries. Those were issues in which the concerns of other cabinet level stakeholders and the domestic political concerns of the White House had to be taken into account and were often controlling.

Since the end of World War II, there has been a major shift in how and where foreign policy is made in the executive branch. The major counter-balance has been when the U.S. Congress intervened actively as in the early days of human rights policy in the late 70's and in recent efforts on the U.S. policy towards China.

**CARLOS OSORIO:** Two aspects of the documents have not received enough attention. Judges and families can obtain a great deal of information about human rights violations. For example, a document from April 1980 reports on a conversation with an Argentine intelligence source. The document makes reference to two Montoneros who were captured in Brazil. (In early 2000, I remember that Edgardo Binstock, whose wife had disappeared, visited the National Security Archive accompanied by an official from the Argentine Embassy in Washington. He was looking for information about the disappearance of his wife in Brazil.) The document from April 1980 says that Intelligence Battalion 601 had captured a Montonero, and during the interrogation learned that this person was to meet in Rio de Janeiro with two other Montoneros traveling from Mexico. The two Montoneros from Mexico were Horacio Campiglia and Susana de Binstock. Argentine Intelligence Battalion 601 contacted its counterparts in Brazilian military intelligence for permission to conduct an operation in Rio to capture the two Montoneros arriving from Mexico. The Brazilians granted permission and a special team of Argentines flew to Rio aboard an Argentine Air Force C-130, as part of an operation commanded by a Lieutenant Colonel Román. Both Montoneros from Mexico were captured alive and returned to Argentina aboard this C-130. According to the document, these two Montoneros were being held in an Army secret jail known as Campo de Mayo. This example illustrates what kind of information the documents contain.

A second aspect revealed in the documents concerns how the U.S. bureaucracy, and particularly the State Department bureaucracy, worked in human rights terms, as Tex Harris has discussed. It is interesting to see how individuals made a difference, how they implemented policy, what decisions they made to make human rights policy work in Argentina. In

addition, there was an attempt within the U.S. government to develop mechanisms and standards by which to evaluate for the U.S. Congress how the Argentines were behaving on human rights. What do we ask the Argentines to do first? What is most important, to release prisoners, to release lists of those being detained? These kinds of questions began to be asked at the end of 1976 during the Ford administration, and continued into the Carter administration in early 1977, at the same time that the administration began to design mechanisms for monitoring human rights, in order to be able to justify to Congress support for the Argentine government. The documents are interesting—as well as relevant today—in that they show the U.S. government outlining democratic standards to deal with terrorism and respect human rights. A document from December 27, 1976, reports on a meeting in which the following steps were suggested to be conveyed to the Argentines: 1) publish immediately the list of all those held in detention; 2) treat detainees humanely; 3) reestablish the jurisdiction of civilian courts; 4) provide all prisoners with access to their families; 5) release all detainees who are not promptly charged; 6) provide for public, not secret trials.

These steps make us in the United States think about what is valid and invalid in counterinsurgency, counter-terrorism, homeland security, and human rights.

**ARIEL ARMONY, WOODROW WILSON CENTER AND COLBY COLLEGE:** I would like to shift the focus of the discussion a bit to Argentina. What do the documents tell us about the working of the repressive machinery? There are two important elements to consider. Joe Tulchin mentioned the fragmentation of the armed forces, which is well known. In addition, there are one or two documents in the collection in which a U.S. official reports that the Argentine intelligence forces were not being controlled by the government. That is, they appeared to be acting independently. I found those documents very intriguing: to what extent could the Videla administration actually control what was going on, control the machinery of terror?

Another dimension concerns something that we have not been able to understand or document well: the changes in the war against subversion from the perspective of the military. From their perspective, the peak of repression that Kathryn Sikkink discussed had to do with a military response

to the actions of the guerrillas. But there are several statements in 1977 by Argentine military officers saying that the military apparatus of the guerrillas had been destroyed. Do the declassified documents reflect a change in focus by the military, from more indiscriminate repression to more selective targeting, including the extraterritorial operations that formed part of Operation Condor? Are the documents useful in understanding the relationship between the governing military junta and the intelligence services?

**JOHN DINGES:** The questions raised by Ariel Armony are central to the research that I have been doing. I don't believe that the documents by themselves give a very clear picture of the functioning of the security forces. They do contain some valuable information on the central intelligence operations, for example, Intelligence Battalion 601 (the principle repressive unit of army intelligence), *Reunión Central* (apparently the national coordinating unit of 601) and the infamous SIDE (State Intelligence Agency), which was controlled by the presidency.

What is necessary is to put the information in the documents together with a rigorous study of what was happening on the ground politically and within the guerrilla organizations: who was being arrested, when, and under what circumstances. Thus far, perhaps inevitably, we have seen a victim's history of human rights, but not a political history of the repression. It is certainly the case that in 1976 the repression was in reaction to the ERP and the Montoneros. A great upswing in their activity started in 1975 and continued in 1976. The guerrilla organizations were dismantled by the end of 1976, but the repression continued at almost the same rate in 1977. There are indications that some ninety five percent of people who were *chupado*, arrested and subsequently disappeared after 1976, appear to have been people involved with the church, with human rights organizations and labor unions, that is, people who were only peripherally involved—if at all—with the guerrilla organizations. Determining what was going on requires pulling together all the information from various sources, including the documents.

**CARLOS SERSALE:** A great deal has been written in Argentina on how the machinery for repression worked.

I would like to add to what John Dinges said regarding the qualitative nature of the repression. Between the coup on March 24, 1976, and June

## Discussion

of that year, arrests and disappearances were part of an intelligence operation targeting union leaders in places such as Córdoba, Rosario, and San Nicolás, as well as leaders from student organizations. The repression was directed against people who could make a difference in resisting the dictatorship. One does not need the U.S. documents to see how the armed forces acted in a coordinated fashion. They went after the leaders who could organize resistance. This pattern is widely reflected in the Argentine literature.

According to official sources, 10,000 people were killed or disappeared. John Dinges has used the figure of 22,000. I prefer to use the figure of 30,000, based on the information of Argentine human rights groups.

**CYNTHIA ARNISON:** I want to take the discussion away from Argentina and back to the United States. Tex Harris mentioned some of the actions of the U.S. Congress. It is important to note that there were efforts in May and June of 1977 in the House of Representatives to end U.S. military aid to Argentina. Those efforts involved amendments to two foreign aid bills. One was unsuccessful and one ultimately succeeded, but the important point is that both were actively opposed by the Carter administration. We can offer a number of explanations for the administration's behavior, but if we are looking at the Carter record and at the kind of mixed messages that were sent to the Argentine junta, I think that the administration's opposition to the efforts to cut aid has to be taken into consideration.

## NOTES

1. Castro resigned as the governor of Arizona to take the job as U.S. ambassador to Argentina. He had served as ambassador previously in El Salvador and Bolivia.
2. Stephen G. Rabe, *The Most Dangerous Area in the World: John F. Kennedy Confronts Communist Revolution in Latin America* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1995).



## Green Light-Red Light: Henry Kissinger's 2-Track Approach to Human Rights During the "Condor Years" in Chile and Argentina<sup>1</sup>

JOHN DINGES

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*"[Argentine foreign minister] Guzzetti went to the U.S. fully expecting to hear some strong, firm, direct warnings on his govt's human rights practices. Rather than that, he has returned in a state of jubilation, convinced that there is no real problem with the U.S. over this issue. —Ambassador Hill in cable criticizing Kissinger.*

*My evaluation is that you are a victim of all left-wing groups around the world, and that your greatest sin was that you overthrew a government which was going communist. —Henry Kissinger in meeting with General Pinochet.*

*We are behind you. You are the leader. But you have a punitive system for your friends. — General Pinochet to Kissinger in the same meeting.*

Henry Kissinger didn't become one of the most powerful men in the world as an advocate of human rights. Yet it was on his watch as secretary of state that human rights entered the central lexicon of U.S. foreign policy and became enshrined in U.S. laws and government institutions. Human rights was run on two separate and often contradictory tracks, leading to a Machiavellian gulf of moral ambiguity in the record of U.S. foreign policy under Kissinger's stewardship. Nowhere are these separate tracks more visible—now that previously secret documents on Argentina and Chile have been released—than in U.S. actions surrounding human rights atrocities in the Southern Cone.<sup>2</sup>

The years I have called the Condor years, the mid-1970s, were the period in which principle allies of the United States in the region were winning the war against leftist revolutionary groups but at the price of tens of thousands of people tortured, killed and disappeared, most of them with no connection to the armed groups. In 1975, at the instigation of Chile, the six countries of the Southern Cone formed an unprecedented international alliance of their security forces, called Operation Condor. The countries exchanged not only intelligence but prisoners, and allowed security forces the freedom to operate across borders in other member countries. The alliance, joining Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Bolivia, Paraguay and Brazil, resulted in the capture and murder of hundreds of political refugees who had sought safe haven outside their own countries. The United States soon learned about Condor, but did nothing at first. Only after discovering that Condor was planning assassinations of opposition leaders outside Latin America did Kissinger put a protest in motion. But the protest was never delivered and shortly thereafter a team using the Condor apparatus assassinated a prominent Chilean exile, Orlando Letelier, and an American woman in Washington, D.C. The U.S. failure to halt Condor's activities, I argue in my book, was at least partly the result of a two-track policy of covert encouragement of such criminal activities by Kissinger that is now fully documented in both Chile and Argentina.

It was Kissinger, as national security adviser, who in 1970 chaired the 40 Committee, the secret body of high officials that approved the covert action program to subvert Chile's democratic election in 1970, and then to organize a military coup to prevent the inauguration of Socialist candidate Salvador Allende. The CIA reported only to Kissinger in the White House about its most extreme actions—those so secret they were concealed from the other 40 Committee members and even from the U.S. ambassador to Chile. Such hidden actions including the supplying of “grease guns”—submachine guns—to groups plotting to kidnap the chief of the Chilean armed forces, General René Schneider, who stood in the way of a coup. When one of the groups botched the kidnapping and killed the general, Kissinger and the CIA gave contradictory versions of the U.S. role. Kissinger claimed he ordered the coup operation stopped before the kidnapping but the CIA insisted no such “stand-down” order was received. A Chilean court convicted the leaders of both groups and

concluded they were working together throughout the coup plotting, including the botched kidnapping of Schneider. The CIA paid hush money to a leader of the assassins who escaped into exile.<sup>3</sup>

The various plans to oust Allende were referred to as “Track I” and “Track II,” depending on their level of secrecy and degree of criminal activity. This duality of approach, with its accompanying elements of confusion, obfuscation and even cover-up, continued in Kissinger’s actions during the Pinochet government. When the coup led by General Pinochet finally accomplished the U.S. policy goal by overthrowing Allende in 1973, Kissinger and the CIA became personally invested in the success of General Pinochet’s government. As secretary of state after September 1973, Kissinger sent signals to his subordinates that advocacy of human rights was a low priority, and discouraged reports from Santiago about Pinochet’s abuses. When the new ambassador to Santiago, David Popper, reported to Washington that he had initiated a discussion of human rights in a high-level meeting, Kissinger scrawled on the cable, “Tell Popper to cut out the political science lectures.”<sup>4</sup>

Embassy officers in Santiago and desk officers in Washington learned quickly the danger of passing negative news about Pinochet up to the secretary of state. When two Embassy political officers wrote a description of empty streets in Santiago during the second anniversary celebration of Pinochet’s coup, the report was excised from cables sent to Washington. An officer’s eyewitness account of a concentration camp met a similar fate. State Department officers learned to use “weasel words” in writing about Chile, according to one key officer. Another officer working on Chile from State Department headquarters summed up Kissinger’s policy toward Pinochet in three words: “Defend, Defend, Defend.”

Yet human rights as a value in international politics was an powerful idea whose time was fast approaching in the early 1970s. During questioning in his confirmation hearings on being nominated to be President Nixon’s secretary of state in 1973, Kissinger framed human rights as a value to be subordinated to strategic goals: “In our bilateral dealings we will follow a pragmatic policy of degree. If the infringement on human rights is not so offensive that we cannot live with it, we will seek to work out what we can with the country involved in order to increase our influence. If the infringement is so offensive that we cannot live with it we will avoid dealing with the offending country.”<sup>5</sup> Kissinger drew a distinction

between “aggressive totalitarianism”—the communist nations and their allies—and the governments who were trying to resist communism. Chile and Argentina under anticommunist military rule were clearly in the category of regimes the United States could “live with” because they were engaged in a higher struggle whose ultimate goal—in Kissinger’s view—was the preservation of freedom.

By early 1976, however, Kissinger’s “see-no-evil” approach to Pinochet had become untenable in the wake of worldwide condemnation of Chile and rising outrage inside the United States over abuses of the new military governments in Latin America. Congressional leaders such as Senator Ted Kennedy of Massachusetts and Representatives Don Fraser of Minnesota, Tom Harkin of Iowa and Edward Koch of New York were accomplishing in Congress what the executive branch refused to do: use the leverage of U.S. economic and military aid to put pressure on human rights violators. The congressional pressure was holding up the planned sale to Chile of a fleet of U.S. F-5E fighter airplanes Pinochet had ordered as part of his military buildup against his neighbor to the north, Peru, which was threatening to re-open a century old territorial dispute.

★ ★ ★

On June 8, 1976, in the midst of Chile and Argentina’s underground offensive against the radical and moderate enemies of the region’s military governments, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger arrived in Santiago. On his agenda: a speech on human rights to a conference of the Organization of American States and a meeting with General Augusto Pinochet.

Kissinger commented on the “beautiful building” when he arrived at noon on Tuesday June 8 at Pinochet’s office on the 22nd floor. Pinochet began by saying he was “grateful” that Kissinger had come to the conference.

The account of what was said at the meeting between Pinochet and Kissinger was shielded in secrecy for more than 20 years until a transcript was finally declassified in 1998.<sup>6</sup> These excerpts are from that document:

**THE SECRETARY:** ...In the United States, as you know, we are sympathetic with what you are trying to do here. I think that the previous government was headed toward Communism. We wish your government well.

## The Dirty War's Declassified Documents

At the same time, we face massive domestic problems, in all branches of the government, especially Congress, but also in the Executive, over the issue of human rights. As you know, Congress is now debating further restraints on aid to Chile. We are opposed. ...

I am going to speak about human rights this afternoon in the General Assembly. I delayed my statement until I could talk to you. I wanted you to understand my position.

We want to deal in moral persuasion, not by legal sanctions. It is for this reason that we oppose the Kennedy Amendment.<sup>7</sup>

In my statement, I will treat human rights in general terms, and human rights in a world context. I will refer in two paragraphs to the report on Chile of the OAS Human Rights Commission. I will say that the human rights issue has impaired relations between the U.S. and Chile. This is partly the result of Congressional actions. I will add that I hope you will shortly remove those obstacles.

I will also call attention to the Cuba report and to the hypocrisy of some who call attention to human rights as a means of intervening in governments.

I can do no less, without producing a reaction in the U.S. which would lead to legislative restrictions.

The speech is not aimed at Chile. I wanted to tell you about this. My evaluation is that you are a victim of all left-wing groups around the world, and that your greatest sin was that you overthrew a government which was going communist.

...

It would really help if you would let us know the measures you are taking in the human rights field. None of this is said with the hope of undermining your government. I want you to succeed and I want to retain the possibility of aid.

If we defeat the Kennedy amendment, — I don't know if you listen in on my phone, but if you do you have just heard me issue instructions to Washington to make an all-out effort to do just that— if we defeat it, we will deliver the F-5E's as we agreed to do. ...

**PINOCHET:** We are returning to institutionalization step by step. But we are constantly being attacked by the Christian Democrats. They have a strong voice in Washington. Not [with] the people in the Pentagon, but they do get through to Congress. [Christian Democratic

opposition leader] Gabriel Valdés has access. Also [exiled former foreign minister Orlando] Letelier.

**THE SECRETARY:** I have not seen a Christian Democrat for years.

**PINOCHET:** ...Letelier has access to the Congress. We know they are giving false information. ... On the human rights front, we are slowly making progress. We are now down to 400 [prisoners]. We have freed more. ...

**THE SECRETARY:** If you could group the releases, ... have a bigger program of releases, that would be better for the psychological impact of the releases....

My statement and our position are designed to allow us to say to the Congress that we are talking to the Chilean government and therefore Congress need not act.

We want an outcome that is not deeply embarrassing to you. But as friends, I must tell you that we face a situation in the United States where we must be able to point to events here in Chile, or we will be defeated.

...

**PINOCHET:** We are behind you. You are the leader. But you have a punitive system for your friends.

**THE SECRETARY:** There is merit in what you say. It is a curious time in the U.S.

Kissinger went almost directly from Pinochet's office to the cavernous meeting hall downstairs where he delivered his address to the assembled OAS foreign ministers. It was the first formal pronouncement by Kissinger on human rights, and it made the front page of the *New York Times* and other papers. It was a tough public statement that was seen as significantly raising the profile of human rights in the pantheon of values in U.S. diplomacy. "One of the most compelling issues of our time, and one which calls for the concerted action of all responsible peoples and nations, is the necessity to protect and extend the fundamental rights of humanity," he said, and proposed that the OAS give its fledgling Inter-American Human Rights Commission an enlarged budget and greater authority to investigate abuses. The commission had presented a 191-page report on continuing abuses in Chile, carefully documenting hundreds of cases of mass arrests, torture and disappearances.

Then Kissinger delivered what could only be taken as a stark assessment of relations with Chile. “In the United States, concern is widespread in the executive branch, in the press, and in the Congress, which has taken the extraordinary step of enacting specific statutory limits on United States military and economic aid to Chile. The condition of human rights ... has impaired our relationship with Chile and will continue to do so. We wish this relationship to be close, and all friends of Chile hope that obstacles raised by conditions alleged in the report will soon be removed.”<sup>8</sup> Chile and Cuba were the only countries signaled out for specific criticism in Kissinger’s speech.

★ ★ ★

It was a strong statement, especially coming from Kissinger. Yet the public words had already been discounted by Kissinger’s private assurances of support, admiration and sympathy in his meeting with Pinochet. Kissinger made it clear that the public speech was tactical, not a matter of principle, and that Pinochet’s real problems were with Congress, not with the administration. Kissinger’s private meeting with Pinochet was the green light track, followed by the public red light warning on human rights. Only perhaps in Kissinger’s mind were the contradictory tracks reconciled as principled, effective policy.

The CIA quickly gave a rosy assessment, in a secret report circulated in Washington, that the Pinochet government was “gratified” and derived “badly needed respectability” from the OAS meeting in Santiago.<sup>9</sup> The meeting also provided an occasion for Pinochet and his allies to strengthen what the CIA described as an emerging “anti-Marxist bloc.”

Yet recognition of the ambiguity and contradiction of U.S. actions toward the dictatorships provides a central insight in understanding the human rights tragedies of the era. It would be a mistake to assume there was a nefarious plot in the State Department to encourage the Southern Cone military dictatorships to violate human rights during the worst years of repression, the Condor Years of 1973–1977. There is a plethora of cables to the contrary, which cannot be dismissed as some sort of elaborate and cynical effort to create a cover story. In fact, there were two message tracks, both authentic: one conveyed official U.S. disapproval of human rights atrocities; the other more secret message displayed a green light to the mass torture and disappearance tactics used to fight leftist opposition.

Those who believe—out of ideology or cynicism—that there was no sincere effort by many U.S. diplomats to encourage respect for human rights during this time of terror do so in defiance of the obvious and abundant record now available to us in the declassified document collections for Chile and Argentina. Such simple condemnation misses the deeper story that has much more disturbing significance for ongoing U.S. policy in contemporary wars on terrorism. A clear conclusion can be drawn from U.S. actions during the Condor years: dictators will not understand a two-track moral message on human rights, however carefully crafted the message. The U.S. message will instead be grasped as a single muddled endorsement of the brutal strategy and tactics upon which our unsubtle allies are already embarked.

Sometimes the red light is from one institution, the green light from another—as in the roles the CIA and State Department adopted in some cases. Sometimes it was individual officials who showed the green light even as other officials tried to put up a red light. This is the case with the various ambassadors in the Condor countries: the documents demonstrate that Ambassadors Ernest Siracusa in Montevideo and William Stedman in La Paz tended to show an encouraging green light, while ambassadors George Landau in Paraguay and Robert Hill in Argentina tended to show red.

Sometimes—too often—both red and green lights are shown side by side in the same document or in the same official. This was the case of the August 23, 1976, State Department cable on Operation Condor a month before the Letelier assassination. The cable from Kissinger to his ambassadors in the Condor countries was a real attempt to stop planned assassinations known to be underway, but it also contains passages that go to great lengths to emphasize U.S. understanding and endorsement of the goals of the antiterrorist fight. Likewise in Chile, Ambassador David Popper, in his reporting after the 1973 coup, combined criticism of human rights violations with even stronger condemnation of the extremist left. Yet he flinched when faced with the challenge of confronting Pinochet with a clear warning on Condor—a warning that in my analysis would have caused Pinochet to call off the Letelier assassination already underway. Instead of decisive action, Ambassador Popper undertook to fashion a compromise that would avoid offending General Pinochet. In Washington, officials dithered over details and ultimately Kissinger's order



to stop Condor was withdrawn. The sequel to the State Department's exercise in vacillation was the car bombing that killed Letelier and an American woman, Ronni Moffitt, in Washington D.C. on September 21, 1976, an act of Condor terrorism committed by a country considered to be one of the United States closest allies in Latin America.<sup>10</sup>

To be sure, the failure to deliver a clear red light message on Operation Condor was not the cause of the unprecedented act of terrorism on U.S. soil, but it was the prelude. In other cases in which similar muddled messages were received, especially in Argentina, the war on terrorism—unrestrained by effective U.S. policy messages—played out in tens of thousands of murders of leftist activists and innocent people.

It would be naïve to suggest that it was entirely within the power of the U.S. government, even if that were the U.S. goal, to prevent the military governments of the Condor countries from killing and torturing their own citizens in their own territory. Yet I have been able to fully document another episode, involving Argentina, in which a U.S. ambassador's attempts to flash a red light against the military's abuses was countered by a green light from Secretary of State Kissinger in Washington.<sup>11</sup>

Ambassador Robert Hill an unlikely human rights hero. He married into the enormously wealthy W.R. Grace family, whose vast investments and unabashed manipulations of political power in Latin America had made it the stereotype—for Latin Americans—of Yankee imperialism. He was a Republican Party activist who had served in Congress and in several political appointments in the State and Defense Departments under Presidents Nixon and Ford. As ambassador to Spain, he was known as an inveterate defender of Generalissimo Franco.

As Argentina sank deeper into violence in 1976, however, Ambassador Hill responded not from his anticommunist ideology and pro-business instincts but from a simpler moral outrage at the mounting evidence of mass murder surrounding him. When the military coup took place in March, Hill had been in conversations with prospective coup leaders, and had been encouraged by assurances that the new government would avoid the atrocities of the Pinochet takeover in Chile. Indeed, for the first weeks, that seemed to be the case, and the scattered killings that occurred were able to be explained as the work of death squads outside the control of the military junta. In line with official U.S. policy, Hill endorsed the military's goals to bring order and defeat leftist terrorism.

Neither human rights organizations nor U.S. intelligence was aware that the military had already begun a program of secret exterminations of hundreds of suspected enemies in the months before the coup.<sup>12</sup> It would be many months, even years, before the extent of the mass killing would be discovered. Yet Hill quickly learned enough about what was happening to begin to take action. The events that destroyed the illusion of a “moderate” military junta were the killings of foreign leaders in Argentina—crimes now known to be linked to Operation Condor—the murders of Uruguayan congressional leaders Zelmar Michelini and Héctor Gutiérrez in late May 1976, followed quickly by the assassination of former president Juan José Torres of Bolivia.

Hill cabled the State Department in late May that “the time has come for a demarche at the highest level” to call attention to the worsening human rights situation. He received authorization for an urgent meeting with the new foreign minister, Admiral César Guzzetti, to give him a strong message of U.S. concern. Those who killed Michelini, Gutiérrez and others, the ambassador said, “seem to operate with impunity [and] are generally believed to be connected with the Argentine security forces. Whether they are or not, their continued operation can only be harmful to the GOA [government of Argentina] itself and cause consternation among Argentina’s friends abroad.”<sup>13</sup>

The killings only escalated, despite Hill’s imprecations. At a subsequent meeting with Foreign Minister Guzzetti, Hill got an inkling that his tough message on human rights may have been undermined by a different message from Washington, even before he delivered it. A few weeks before his September 17 meeting, several priests had been murdered and a pile of bodies of suspected guerrillas had been found at the locality of Pilar north of Buenos Aires. Yet Foreign Minister Guzzetti seemed to dismiss Hill’s concerns, according to Hill’s cable to Washington.<sup>14</sup>

“THE FOREIGN MINISTER SAID GOA HAD BEEN SOMEWHAT SURPRISED BY INDICATIONS OF SUCH STRONG CONCERN ON THE PART OF THE USG IN HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN ARGENTINA. WHEN HE HAD SEEN SECY OF STATE KISSINGER IN SANTIAGO,<sup>15</sup> THE LATTER HAD SAID HE ‘HOPED THE ARGENTINE GOVT COULD GET THE TERRORIST PROBLEM UNDER CONTROL AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.’ GUZZETTI SAID THAT HE HAD REPORTED THIS TO PRESIDENT VIDELA AND TO THE CABINET, AND THAT

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THEIR IMPRESSION HAD BEEN THAT USG'S OVERRIDING CONCERN WAS NOT HUMAN RIGHTS BUT RATHER THAT GOA 'GET IT OVER QUICKLY:'"

Hill said he tried to explain that Secretary Kissinger surely was not implying insensitivity toward human rights and that "murdering priests and dumping 47 bodies in the street in one day could not be seen in context of defeating terrorists quickly. ... What USG hoped was that GOA could soon defeat terrorists, Yes. But do so as nearly as possible within the law. I said if any other meaning had been placed on the secretary's remarks, I was sure it was a misinterpretation."

Hill was hopeful he had corrected what he believed were misconceptions Guzzetti had taken away from his Santiago conversation with Kissinger. There would be another opportunity soon to drive home the message on human rights. Guzzetti said he was traveling to Washington in October, and Hill helped set up a series of high-level meetings, including separate meetings with Kissinger, Vice President Nelson Rockefeller, and Assistant Secretary for Latin America Harry Schlaudeman. He was sure human rights would be high on the list of talking points.

But when Guzzetti returned from Washington, Hill learned that the opposite had happened. Far from appearing chastened, Admiral Guzzetti was "euphoric" and greeted Hill with an effusive and uncharacteristic hug when they met. The meetings had been a grand success, and Guzzetti had already delivered an enthusiastic report to President Videla. He had encountered barely a word of criticism about human rights but rather "consensus ... to get the terrorist problem over as soon as possible."

From Rockefeller, he said he heard, "finish the terrorist problem quickly... the US wanted a strong Argentina and wanted to cooperate with the GOA."

From Kissinger: "The secretary, he said, had reiterated the advice given to him at the Santiago meeting, had urged Argentina 'to be careful' and had said that if the terrorist problem was over by December or January, he (the secretary) believed serious problems could be avoided in the US."

His open-arms reception in Washington "had gone far beyond his expectations." Guzzetti "expressed appreciation that high officials in our government 'understand the Argentine problem and stand with us during this difficult period.'"

Ambassador Hill reported the conversations to Washington on October 19 in a long cable in which he barely controlled his fury.

“GUZZETTI WENT TO THE U.S. FULLY EXPECTING TO HEAR SOME STRONG, FIRM, DIRECT WARNINGS ON HIS GOVT’S HUMAN RIGHTS PRACTICES. RATHER THAN THAT, HE HAS RETURNED IN A STATE OF JUBILATION, CONVINCED THAT THERE IS NO REAL PROBLEM WITH THE U.S. OVER THIS ISSUE. BASED ON WHAT GUZZETTI IS DOUBTLESS REPORTING TO THE GOA, IT MUST NOW BELIEVE THAT IF IT HAS ANY PROBLEMS WITH THE U.S. OVER HUMAN RIGHTS, THEY ARE CONFINED TO CERTAIN ELEMENTS OF CONGRESS AND WHAT IT REGARDS AS SLANTED AND/OR UNINFORMED MINOR SEGMENTS OF PUBLIC OPINION. WHILE THIS CONVICTION EXISTS, IT WILL BE UNREALISTIC AND INEFFECTUAL FOR THIS EMBASSY TO PRESS REPRESENTATIONS TO THE GOA OVER HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS. HILL.”<sup>16</sup>

Hill’s angry cable was a rare example of an ambassador daring to criticize Secretary of State Kissinger in an official communication, and his effrontery was not missed in Washington. Assistant Secretary Shlaudeman put the matter on Kissinger’s desk within hours. “Bob Hill has registered for the record his concern for human rights in a bitter complaint about our purported failure to impress on Foreign Minister Guzzetti how seriously we view the rightist violence in Argentina,” he wrote to Kissinger. “I propose to respond for the record.”

Kissinger approved Shlaudeman’s response to Hill, which began:

“AS IN OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES YOU HAVE UNDOUBTEDLY ENCOUNTERED IN YOUR DIPLOMATIC CAREER, GUZZETTI HEARD ONLY WHAT HE WANTED TO HEAR. HE WAS TOLD IN DETAIL HOW STRONGLY OPINION IN THIS COUNTRY HAS REACTED AGAINST REPORTS OF ABUSES BY THE SECURITY FORCES...GUZZETTI’S INTERPRETATION IS STRICTLY HIS OWN.”<sup>17</sup>

Shlaudeman’s clarifications, however, referred explicitly only to his own meeting with Guzzetti. His cable did not challenge the remarks Guzzetti had attributed to Kissinger and Rockefeller. He seemed to throw up his hands,<sup>18</sup> seconding Hill’s comment that future representations on human rights would be ineffectual.

“IN ANY EVENT, YOU AND WE HAVE LAID IT OUT AS BEST WE COULD. IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES, I AGREE THAT THE ARGEN-

TINES WILL HAVE TO MAKE THEIR OWN DECISIONS AND THAT FURTHER EXHORTATIONS OR GENERALIZED LECTURES FROM US WOULD NOT BE USEFUL AT THIS POINT.”<sup>19</sup>

The futility of the ambassador's lectures could not have been clearer as the toll of atrocities by the Argentine military mounted in the waning months of 1976. Kissinger's State Department was sending both a red light and a green light, and the green light was coming from higher authority—Kissinger himself. Hill described a “discouraging” meeting with President Videla several weeks before in which the Argentine president put the Embassy officials in their subordinate place. Videla repeated Guzzetti's version of his friendly visit with Kissinger and contrasted it to the ambassador's pressing attitude on human rights. Videla then said, according to Hill, “He had impression senior officers of USG understood [the] situation his govt faces but junior bureaucrats do not.” Hill, a full ambassador, was obviously put in the category of “junior.”

If there were lingering doubt about Kissinger's real sentiments, they were removed after the secretary of state left office and was welcomed by the junta in a private visit in 1978. According to a cable by the new ambassador, Raúl Castro, Kissinger met alone with Videla to offer suggestions about how to improve relations with the new U.S. administration of President Jimmy Carter, who had placed unprecedented emphasis on human rights. Then in open meetings with prominent Argentines, Kissinger lavishly praised the Videla government. “He explained his opinion [that] GOA [Government of Argentina] had done an outstanding job in wiping our terrorist forces. But also cautioned that methods used in fighting terrorism must not be perpetuated.”

Indeed, Argentina's military leaders had followed Kissinger's recipe for quick, intensive victory in the war on terrorism. By the end of 1976, the ERP (Peoples Revolutionary Army) had been eliminated as a guerrilla force, and Montoneros were fleeing the country in droves. The guerrilla alliance, Revolutionary Coordinating Junta (*Junta Coordinadora Revolucionaria*, or JCR), which joined ERP, Chile's MIR, Uruguay's Tupamaros and the Bolivian ELN, had been decimated and driven out of its headquarters in Argentina. The government had moved with all speed. By the most conservative count, almost 4,000 people had disappeared into the military network of secret torture camps in 1976. Another 1,000 people were killed in military actions in which bodies were left behind

**Mass Killings in Argentina and Chile  
CONADEP and Battalion 601 Calculations, 1973-1983**

	CONADEP LIST	Intelligence Battalion 601 count	Chile
1973	17		
1974	42		1,823
1975	326*	(903)	421
1976	3792	(10251)	150
1977	2979	(8207)	164
1978	958	(2639)	44
1979-1983	975	no data	595
Total	9098**	22,000	

Sources: *Argentina*: National Commission on the Disappeared (Comisión Nacional de Desaparición de Personas, CONADEP), a list of names of detained-disappeared. The list was published in 1983 as part of the CONADEP report and contains a small number of obvious duplications. Intelligence Battalion 601 count, October 1975-July 1978, Arancibia document V/238. Arancibia's report on the Battalion 601 count lists names of several hundred people, mostly from 1975. I estimated the number of deaths per year by distributing the 22,000 deaths over the four years according to the yearly percentage distribution found in the CONADEP list. *Chile*: Comisión Nacional de Reparación y Reconciliación (deaths and disappeared).

\*Because the CONADEP list does not include killings where bodies were found, which was a considerable number in 1975 and 1976. The *New York Times* reported in December 1975 that a total of 1,100 people had been killed on all sides in political violence in that year—a number that may be assumed not to include the disappearances, which were not known in detail until years later. In 1976 a similar number of publicly known deaths were reported.

\*\* The total is higher than the 1983 number of 8961 published by CONADEP in 1983 because of subsequent addition of new cases.

and could be identified. Not surprisingly, the Argentine military had ignored Kissinger's advice to refrain from perpetuating their "methods" once the war was won. The secret killing continued throughout 1977 and 1978, resulting in 3937 additional disappearances, according to the conservative count of the Sábato commission. (According to secret documents disclosed for the first time in *The Condor Years*, the Argentine military intelligence Batallion 601 kept its own count of the killings—totaling 22,000 for the period October 1975– July 1978. According to that count, the number of dead during Kissinger's green light period exceeded 10,000.)

A State Department intelligence report on the war on terrorism that was to merit such high praise from Kissinger gave this detailed assessment six months after the coup: "The most spectacular aspect of the counter-terrorist drive has been the murderous exploits of extralegal, right-wing goon squads. Operating with impunity and usually posing as security officials, the right-wingers are responsible for abducting and/or murdering hundreds of 'leftist security risks,' including political exiles from neighboring countries, foreign nationals, politicians, students, journalists, and priests. A few actual terrorists probably have fallen prey to rightist vengeance, but the great majority of the victims have not been guerrillas."<sup>20</sup>

### NOTES

1. This paper is adapted from the book *The Condor Years: How Pinochet and his Allies Brought Terrorism to Three Continents* (New York: The New Press, forthcoming, March 2004).

2. Two collections have been released by executive order: The Argentina Declassification Project, a collection of approximately 4,000 State Department documents released in September 2002 in accordance with a 2000 order from Secretary of State Madeleine Albright; and the Chile Declassification Project, in 1999 and 2000, consisting of 24,000 previously secret documents on U.S. relations with the Pinochet government from the State Department, CIA, the Pentagon and other government agencies.

3. "Alleged Assassination Plots Involving Foreign Leaders: Interim Report of the (Senate) Select Committee on Intelligence Activities," November 1975, 225–227. Kissinger said in an interview with Elizabeth Farnsworth of PBS's *The News Hour*, "As far as we were concerned and the White House, the thing ended on October 15th." The CIA points to a series of documents after that date in which the coup preparations are continuing with CIA help, including the delivery of the submachine

guns to one group only a few hours before a second group carried out the fatal kidnapping. Leaders of both groups, General Camilo Valenzuela and retired general Roberto Viaux were convicted by a Chilean military court for the coup activity, which found they were working together throughout the coup plotting. Moreover a machine gun found at the site of the kidnapping was of the same type as those provided to the plotters, although the committee investigators said they were not able to determine if it was one of the weapons supplied by the CIA. The CIA recovered all three guns and dumped them in the ocean, making it impossible to know anything about the guns except what the CIA officers said. See Seymour Hersh, *The Price of Power: Kissinger in the Nixon White House* (Summit, 1983), p. 293. The CIA payment of \$35,000 was described as “to keep the prior contact secret, maintain the good will of the group, and for humanitarian reasons.” See CIA Activities in Chile, a report by the CIA to Rep. Maurice D. Hinchey and to the House and Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, unclassified version, September 18, 2000, p. 11.

4. *New York Times*, September 27, 1974.

5. Quoted in Lars Schoultz, *Human Rights and U.S. Policy Toward Latin America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), p. 110.

6. “U.S.-Chilean Relations,” Memorandum of Conversation, June 8, 1976 (also in Chile Collection.) Also present at the meeting was William D. Rogers, who was then assistant secretary for Inter-American Affairs. Pinochet was accompanied by Foreign Minister Patricio Carvajal, Ambassador to the U.S. Manuel Trucco, and Ricardo Claro, a prominent Chilean businessman.

7. The Kennedy amendment, to cut off future military aid to Chile, was passed June 16, 1976. Aid already approved and “in the pipeline” was allowed to be delivered, however.

8. Department of State Bulletin 75 (July 5, 1976), p. 4.

9. CIA Latin Trends, June 28, 1976. (Chile Project)

10. I have identified more than thirty U.S. documents showing foreknowledge of Condor coordination and assassination plans prior to the Letelier assassination. The Condor cable and Popper response referenced here are State 209192, “Operation Condor,” August 23, 1976; and Santiago 8210, August 24, 1976.

11. I first reported on the documents corroborating this episode in January 2002, nine months before the Argentina documents were publicly released, in an article co-authored with Martin Andersen, “Kissinger Had a Hand in ‘Dirty War,’” *Insight on the News: The Washington Times*, January 4, 2002.

12. According to the most definitive list, arranged by date, by the National Commission on the Disappeared (Comisión Nacional de Desaparición de Personas, also known as the Sábato Commission— CONADEP), more than 500 people were disappeared between the time the military was placed in charge of the anti-subversion campaign in October 1975 and the actual coup in March 1976.

13. Buenos Aires 3462, May 25, 1976, “Request for Instructions.” State 129048, May 25, 1976, “Proposed Demarche on Human Rights.” (Argentina Project).



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14. Buenos Aires 6130, September 20, 1976, "Other aspects of September 17 Conversation with Foreign Minister. (Argentina Project). Kissinger's conversation with Guzzetti in Santiago was first reported by Martin Andersen, *The Nation*, October 1987. Andersen's article was based on a memo by Assistant Secretary for Human Rights Patricia Derian, who was told the story by Hill during a visit to Argentina in March 1977. In response to Andersen's article, William Rogers, a close associate of Kissinger's who served as Assistant Secretary for Latin America before Shlaudeman, cast doubt on the story by claiming—inaccurately—that Hill had never reported his concern about the Guzzetti-Kissinger conversation to the State Department. In a letter prepared for Kissinger and given to *The Nation*, Rogers writes: "Hill never told us during the last six months of 1976, while he was working the human rights issue so energetically, that you had misled Guzzetti, or that the junta was under a dangerously misguided impression about your attitude."

15. Kissinger met with Foreign Minister Guzzetti during the OAS meeting in Santiago, on the same occasion of Kissinger's meeting with Pinochet.

16. "Foreign Minister Guzzetti euphoric over visit to United States," Buenos Aires 6871, October 19, 1976. (Argentina Project).

17. State 262786, October 22, 1976, "Guzzetti's Visit to the U.S." (Argentina Project). There is a further wrinkle to this exchange. I found another version of the same cable, with a different concluding paragraph. The alternate version, released to an Argentine court in response to a request under the Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT), instructs Hill to persevere in his representations. "We will continue to impress on Argentina representatives here, as we expect you to do there, that the USG regards most seriously Argentina's international commitments to protect and promote fundamental human rights." About Kissinger's views, this version says that Hill should tell Guzzetti to read a recent speech on human rights given by Kissinger to the Synagogue Council of America. No explanation for the differing versions could be learned.

18. Shlaudeman referred to the episode in an oral history interview, when asked about the controversy over human rights policy: "It really came to a head when I was Assistant Secretary, or it began to come to a head, in the case of Argentina where the dirty war was in full flower. Bob Hill, who was Ambassador then in Buenos Aires, a very conservative Republican politician—by no means liberal or anything of the kind, began to report quite effectively about what was going on, this slaughter of innocent civilians, supposedly innocent civilians—this vicious war that they were conducting, underground war. He, at one time in fact, sent me a back-channel telegram saying that the Foreign Minister, who had just come for a visit to Washington and had returned to Buenos Aires, had gloated to him that Kissinger had said nothing to him about Human Rights. I don't know—I wasn't present at the interview." Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project, interviewed by William E. Knight, May 24, 1993. Hill also shared his concern about Kissinger's assurances to Guzzetti with his chief political officer at

the time, Wayne Smith, who recalled Hill's complaints about "soft-peddling" by the Kissinger State Department: "Kissinger was saying to the Argentines, 'Don't pay too much attention to what we say in public.' ... I certainly have no evidence that [Kissinger said that], but I know that the ambassador believed he did." (Author's interview with Smith.)

19. State 262786, October 22, 1976, *op. cit.*

20. State Department Intelligence and Research (INR) Report no. 603, "Argentina: Six Months of Military Government, September 30, 1976. (Argentina Project).

## **Recovery of Archives concerning Human Rights Violations During the Argentine Dictatorship**

**MARÍA JOSÉ GUEMBE**

**I**nvestigations of state terrorism, regardless of their purpose, require a vast amount of new information. The archives of various national and international governmental agencies are unquestionably valuable in this regard.

In Latin American countries that suffered serious human rights violations, massive declassifications of government documents have yielded: 1) unparalleled records of the methodology used by repressive systems; 2) new material for the reconstruction of recent history; 3) new knowledge and awareness that have deepened the repudiation of such crimes at a political level; and 4) information that has been extremely useful in advancing legal investigations, both to uphold the rights of victims, their relatives, and society to know the truth, and to further the investigation and punishment of the perpetrators of such crimes.

### **THE SOCIAL IMPORTANCE OF RECOVERING FILES DOCUMENTING STATE TERRORISM**

In the particular case of forced disappearances, the investigation of violations requires an investigation of the facts and the provision of this information to the victims' families. To arrive at the truth, the state must make available to the interested parties and to society at large all of the information it holds as well as the means necessary to carry out such an investigation. Public and private archives documenting human rights violations under the dictatorship are a crucial source in the search for truth, memory, and justice.

Archives contribute to the task of reconstructing recent history and serve as an irrefutable basis for the social construction of truth about the crimes, their methodology, and those responsible. They broaden the historical and cultural patrimony that Argentine society needs in order to examine its past. But it is perhaps in the area of justice that such information is the most valuable, shedding light on concrete facts to support judicial investigations.

The state's obligations in this area are found in the doctrine of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. These bodies recognize the right of family members to know the fate of the disappeared as well as the obligations of state parties to investigate human rights violations until the whole truth has been revealed.

The right to know the truth represents a re-conceptualization of long-standing state responsibilities and individual rights. In Argentine law, this right can be seen as “derived from the principal of the sovereignty of the people and the republican form of government” under Article 33 of our National Constitution, which stipulates that the state cannot disregard its obligation to investigate. Any person can demand that the state disclose information on matters that he or she has a right to know. The right to truth, therefore, is one aspect of the right to justice.

From this perspective, the recovery of archives concerning serious human rights violations contributes to a social process that affirms that certain forms of conduct are unacceptable to humanity and that every institutional order must respect and guarantee certain core values, the ethical imperatives upon which our society is founded.

One must also consider the way in which Argentina plans to build the foundation of its democracy. The reconstruction of history, the construction of memory, and the achievement of justice constitute the ethical bases that establish the framework for our collective well-being and growth. Assuring freedom of expression and the right to information are additional key elements in the definition of a democratic state.

Access to public information is an essential tool in the recovering of archives relating to serious human rights violations. Providing access to and publicizing such information serves as an example of transparency applicable to other human rights issues.

## THE RECOVERY OF GOVERNMENT ARCHIVES

The state has an even greater obligation to provide society access to all of the information and means necessary to ascertain the truth precisely because the adoption of a clandestine system of repression is premised upon hiding the truth. Even today, this secrecy contributes to ongoing impunity and represents an obstacle to justice. The armed forces of Argentina have persistently denied the existence of the archival records they hold.

Since the democratic opening, survivors, relatives of the victims, and human rights organizations have provided information to help clarify the fate of thousands of disappeared persons. These same individuals and groups have demanded that democratic institutions become more involved in reconstructing such information in order to arrive at the truth about the past and build the profoundly democratic institutions that society needs.

Nonetheless, extremely valuable official archives have only gradually begun to “appear.”

In one of the more significant cases, documentation was recovered from a “task force” (a group of military personnel that carried out the clandestine repression) that operated in the clandestine detention center known as ESMA, the *Escuela de Mecánica de la Armada* (Navy Mechanics School). The file contained information on disappeared persons and the methodology employed. The Argentine Forensic Anthropology Team (*Equipo Argentino de Antropología Forense*, EAAF), the Center for the Documentation and Investigation of Left Culture (*Centro de Documentación e Investigación para la Cultura de Izquierdas*, CEDINCI), and the Center for Legal and Social Studies (*Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales*, CELS) turned these documents over to the *Cámara Federal de Apelaciones en lo Criminal y Correccional de la Capital Federal*, the federal appeals court with jurisdiction over investigations of crimes committed in the ESMA. In addition, several archives have been recovered from the intelligence departments of the provincial police departments. These cases demonstrate that the terrorist state operated behind a bureaucratic façade that left behind important records that must be located.

The U.S. State Department's declassification of documents has been extremely significant in light of the dearth of Argentine documents from national entities. First, the effort has served to inform public opinion

about the potential of document declassification in investigating past human rights abuses. Second, the documents have provided new perspectives on the past. And finally, the documents have encouraged many judges to make use of such material to advance legal proceedings.

The U.S. action served additionally to underscore the value of access to official documents, including those of another government, even though Argentina has no normative tradition of such public disclosure.

The declassification revealed that evidence of what occurred does, indeed, exist. Offered the security of speaking anonymously and “off-the-record,” many mid-level Argentine officers came forward to provide U.S. Embassy officials with huge amounts of information on specific repressive operations and the structure of state terrorism. In a telling example, documents describe how an individual known by the alias of “Contreras” explained, during meetings with the Embassy, how the task forces and the *Reunión Central* (Central Command) of Battalion 601 were organized.

Declassified documents, like any other source, must be verified. Nonetheless, the recovery of such “voices”—even of third parties—is essential given the scarcity in the justice system of first-hand evidence.

## THE USE OF DECLASSIFIED FILES IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

The criminal investigation and punishment of those responsible for crimes against humanity committed by the Argentine dictatorship were brought to a standstill by the Laws of Due Obedience (*Obediencia Debida*—1986), Full Stop (*Punto Final*—1987) and the Pardon decrees (*Decretos de Indulto*—1989/1990). Since then, legal action has been confined to legal petitions involving the seizure of minors and, more recently, property theft. The impunity laws did not cover either crime.

Human rights organizations have contested the constitutionality of the above-mentioned laws in the courts. Since 2001, several judicial entities have ruled that the laws are unconstitutional, including Judge Gabriel Cavallo, followed by other judges in the Federal Capital and provinces, and the Porteña Federal Court on two occasions. In August 2002, the nation’s attorney general, Nicolás Becerra, issued an exemplary opinion to the effect that the laws were unconstitutional. These rulings are consistent with the jurisprudence emanating from prestigious foreign tribunals,

including the two votes by the British House of Lords upholding the extradition of Augusto Pinochet to Spain, and the unanimous ruling of eleven magistrates of the National Criminal Court (*Audiencia Nacional*) of Madrid, the highest appeals court in penal matters, upholding the initiatives of Judge Baltasar Garzón on acts of genocide and terrorism.

One week after Judge Gabriel Cavallo declared the Argentine amnesty laws unconstitutional, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights issued a similar judgment in the case of the 1991 Barrios Altos massacre in Peru.<sup>1</sup> In its judgment the Inter-American Court stated that “all amnesty provisions, provisions on prescription and the establishment of measures designed to eliminate responsibility are inadmissible, because they are intended to prevent the investigation and punishment of those responsible for serious human rights violations...” Laws contrary to the American Convention on Human Rights, the Court said, “lack legal effect.”<sup>2</sup>

Since the rulings by Argentine courts, several judges have used the information found in the declassified U.S. documents. Significantly, many of them have presented petitions to U.S. authorities.

CELS' experience has shown that the courts incorporate this type of documentation along with the general body of information they request from our organization. Through such official legal petitions, they have taken notice of the documents, publications, and selections developed by our organizations.

In some cases, the information found in these archives has been of fundamental importance. Two examples are the investigation into the 1980 kidnapping and murder of a dozen members of the Montoneros organization and the court case of *Plan Cóndor*. Specifically, the documents provided information on the structure and *modus operandi* of the security and intelligence apparatus implicated in these disappearances.

### FINAL THOUGHTS

Today, Argentina is at a critical juncture with respect to the human rights violations committed during the dictatorship and with respect to the way in which democracy will be rebuilt in the aftermath of the social, political, and economic crisis.

At the time of this writing, the Supreme Court of Justice was about to rule on the constitutionality of the laws of Due Obedience and Punto

Final. The ruling could either open or close the path to justice. This context has given rise to opposing views, polemics, and frequently, the distortion of information.

Some sectors are calling for a social “reconciliation” based on the closing of all judicial proceedings. During the past twenty years of democracy, however, Argentine society has moved in the opposite direction. The passage of so many years without justice has transformed the demands of victims and their relatives into a demand from society as a whole, one that confers ethical meaning and social relevance on these legal proceedings.

The arduous process of constructing memory concerning the most aberrant crimes in Argentine history has helped to prevent a return to authoritarianism and maintain adherence to a democratic system, even in the midst of the country’s most severe political crisis. Our society will recover the value of law and the meaning of justice if it is able to succeed in punishing these crimes.

The documents can provide some clues. We read, for example, that in mid-1978 a senior official of the Argentine government expressed to the U. S. Embassy his concern that the restoration of the rule of law would imply the prosecution of such crimes. The U.S. official reported that this official had expressed “the underlying fear of the military and security forces of a relaxation and a restoration of civilian rule.” According to the U.S. official, the Argentine military feared “a ‘Nuremberg trial’ climate which would threaten them.”<sup>3</sup>

## NOTES

1. In 1991, members of the Peruvian Army murdered 15 people and wounded four in the Barrios Altos neighborhood of Lima, as part of an anti-terrorist operation aimed at suspected Sendero Luminoso guerrillas. Those responsible, as well as other members of the security forces or civilians who had been investigated, prosecuted, or convicted of involvement in human rights crimes were subsequently granted amnesty by the Peruvian Congress.

2. Inter-American Court of Human Rights, “Barrios Altos Case,” Judgment of March 14, 2001, Series C, No. 75, paragraphs 41-44.

3. Department of State Memorandum, Mark L. Schneider to David Newsom, “Argentina,” May 18, 1978, Document No. 780518.



## The U.S. Congress and Argentina: Human Rights and Military Aid<sup>1</sup>

CYNTHIA J. ARNSON

Any consideration of U.S. foreign policy toward Argentina during the 1970s dirty war would be incomplete without reference to the actions of the U.S. Congress. In 1977, and over the objections of the Carter administration, a handful of House and Senate Democrats pushed the legislature to terminate military assistance to Argentina. The story of that effort goes well beyond the evidence of atrocities committed by the Argentine military government, and the resonance those abuses had come to have on Capitol Hill. As such, the story reflects on the changing priorities of U.S. foreign policy and the resurgent role of Congress during a critical period in the history of the Cold War—the end of the Vietnam War. This environment allowed human rights to become, under certain conditions, an issue of national priority, particularly in Latin America where U.S. strategic interests were considered by many to be relatively low.

Even before the last U.S. officials were evacuated from Saigon in the spring of 1975, Congress had begun challenging some of the core assumptions of U.S. foreign policy, which throughout the period after World War II saw the developing world chiefly through the lens of the East-West struggle and the global effort to contain Soviet power.<sup>2</sup> What changed as a result of Vietnam? The principal concept with relevance to Argentina was that U.S. allies could not be chosen simply on the basis of their anti-communism, without regard for the way governments treated their own citizens. In the late 1960s and early 1970s—as opposition to the war expanded and evidence of the corruption and abusiveness of the South Vietnamese government multiplied—a new concept emerged. Not only was support for anti-democratic governments objectionable on a moral level, as it associated the United States with reprehensible regimes,

it also ran counter to U.S. interests, in that governments that maintained themselves in power through suppressing the rights of their own people were inherently unstable. Concern with the internal configuration of states was not an entirely new theme in U.S. foreign policy, but in the bitter and cynical environment engendered by the Vietnam War, human rights appeared to some as the antidote to the amoral geopolitical *realpolitik* that had led to the fiasco in Southeast Asia.

The domestic Watergate scandal provided additional impetus to the emergence of human rights as a key foreign policy principle. The 1974 mid-term election—held just three months after the Judiciary Committee recommended the impeachment of President Richard Nixon—brought to Congress the largest number of newly-elected Democrats since 1948, most of them younger members deeply influenced by the anti-war movement and swept into office in large measure by campaigning “against the system.” The “Watergate babies,” as this group was called, pushed through congressional reforms that democratized the Congress and decentralized power. Many of the congressional human rights initiatives of the mid- and late-1970s were led and sustained by members of this anti-establishment Watergate class.

Specific events in Latin America helped shape the emerging congressional human rights agenda. Foremost among them was the September 1973 military coup against President Salvador Allende in Chile and the subsequent wave of state-sponsored terror against suspected opponents of the regime. Beginning in 1973 and culminating in 1976, Congress, led by Senator Edward Kennedy (D-Massachusetts), limited U.S. assistance to Chile, ultimately banning military aid.<sup>3</sup> Those efforts were fueled not only by reports of unremitting cruelty by the government of General Augusto Pinochet, but also by revelations—first, apparently, to the Congress and then in the U.S. media—of U.S. complicity in Allende’s overthrow. Beginning in September 1974, *New York Times* reporter Seymour Hersh published a series of articles exposing the role that the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency had played in destabilizing the Allende government.<sup>4</sup> As a result of this and other intelligence abuses,<sup>5</sup> the House and Senate throughout 1975 both held extensive hearings on CIA activities. The Senate panel, chaired by Senator Frank Church (D-Idaho), concluded that the United States was involved “on a massive scale” in efforts to prevent Allende’s election in 1964, and had attempted to foment a mil-

itary coup to prevent Allende from taking office when he was elected in 1970. Between 1970 and Allende's overthrow in 1973, the United States spent \$8 million in opposing his presidency.<sup>6</sup> The investigations of CIA abuses in Chile and elsewhere contributed to the successful efforts in both the House and Senate to establish permanent committees to oversee intelligence activities carried out by the executive branch.

As human rights conditions deteriorated throughout the hemisphere, a House subcommittee held landmark hearings on the human rights situation in numerous Latin American countries. Beginning in 1973, the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on International Organizations,<sup>7</sup> chaired by Rep. Don Fraser (D-Minnesota), examined human rights conditions in Chile, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala, Argentina, Cuba, Uruguay, and Paraguay, among others, calling as witnesses both government defenders as well as prominent Latin American clergy, journalists, exiled politicians, and representatives of U.S. church and human rights organizations.<sup>8</sup> The bodies of evidence amassed during these hearings fueled House efforts—some of them successful—to cut U.S. assistance to regimes that abused human rights, including Chile, Uruguay, and Nicaragua, as well as Argentina. Efforts by liberals to sever U.S. aid relationships with dictatorships of the right were matched by the efforts of congressional conservatives to prohibit any assistance to left-wing or Marxist regimes, including those that had come to power in the wake of the U.S. withdrawal from Southeast Asia. Some of these conservatives saw foreign aid as a waste of U.S. taxpayers' dollars and supported human rights restrictions as a way of reducing foreign aid expenditures overall. Thus, many of the human rights initiatives of the 1970s, and particularly those attaching global human rights language to foreign aid bills, prospered as a result of an “unholy alliance” between liberals and conservatives who raised the human rights banner in pursuit of distinctly different goals.

Before President Carter came into office in 1977, Congress had placed human rights on the foreign policy “map” through a number of initiatives that had direct relevance to Latin America. These included:<sup>9</sup>

- The passage in 1974 of Section 502B of the Foreign Assistance Act, which directed the executive branch, “except in extraordinary circumstances,” to reduce or terminate military aid to governments engaged in a “consistent pattern of gross violations of internationally recognized

human rights.” In 1976, Congress strengthened the provision, stipulating that “no security assistance may be provided to any country” whose government committed gross violations of human rights. In “extraordinary circumstances,” the president could provide such aid, but the Congress would have an opportunity to block it by joint resolution requiring the president’s signature. The 1976 legislation also required the State Department to report annually on the human rights practices of countries receiving U.S. assistance, and established the office for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs within the Department of State. Efforts to strengthen Section 502B continued through 1978;

- The adoption in 1974 of a ban on U.S. aid to or training of foreign police forces;<sup>10</sup> and
- The passage in 1975 of Section 116 of the Foreign Assistance Act,<sup>11</sup> which banned economic aid to a country that engaged in a “consistent pattern of gross violations of internationally recognized human rights,” unless the aid directly benefited needy people.<sup>12</sup>

Thus, when President Jimmy Carter took office in 1977 proclaiming that human rights would be a central element of U.S. foreign policy, he did so following years of congressional activism.

In the early years of the Carter policy, the administration clashed frequently with the Congress over the best way to promote human rights, a struggle that unfolded simultaneously within the administration. The administration sought to protect its prerogatives and preserve maximum control and flexibility in carrying out foreign policy, and the theme of “not tying the president’s hands” surfaced regularly in congressional-executive branch relations. Congressional liberals appalled by human rights violations abroad sought to ensure that U.S. aid, particularly military aid, would not be used by oppressive regimes to further the repression of a country’s citizens. Some moderates and conservatives objected to the singling out of particular countries on the basis of their human rights record, when other countries with similarly poor records, but which were deemed important to U.S. national security, received continued support. The congressional debates over terminating military assistance to the Argentine dictatorship revealed all of these currents, providing an illuminating test case of human rights policy during the worst years of Argentina’s dirty war.

To understand what happened in the Congress regarding Argentina in 1977 requires first understanding the basic procedure by which foreign aid

is approved. There are two stages to this process. One, overseen by the House International Relations Committee and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, *authorizes* the executive branch to spend money, establishing in law the basic conditions under which the aid is to be provided. The second step, involving the House and Senate Appropriations Committees (and most importantly, their respective subcommittees on Foreign Operations) actually *appropriates* the money within a given fiscal year. Conditions on aid can be attached to authorization and appropriations bills alike, but by definition, conditions on appropriations bills last the life of the legislation, that is, one year.

Amendments limiting or ending military assistance to Argentina were attached to authorization as well as appropriations bills in 1977. The *foreign aid appropriations bill*, debated by Congress in mid- to late 1977, eliminated military credits and training funds for Fiscal Year 1978, which began on October 1, 1977 and ended on September 30, 1978. The *foreign aid authorization bill*, also debated in the spring and summer of 1977, terminated all aid and credits but not until a year later, after September 30, 1978 (that is, the beginning of Fiscal Year 1979). (An exception was made for the delivery of goods already in the pipeline, that is, contracted for but undelivered.) Argentina was thus subject to a two-stage cut-off of military assistance. A ban affecting military training and weapons sales credits went into effect in October 1977, with a more comprehensive prohibition taking effect exactly one year later.

### SETTING THE STAGE

Before the various congressional committees set about considering foreign aid in 1977, their actions were shaped by several administration initiatives. In December 1976, in accordance with the 1976 law requiring the executive branch to report on human rights conditions in countries receiving U.S. assistance, the Ford administration issued a secret report on human rights conditions in Argentina and five other countries, a report later made public at congressional insistence.<sup>13</sup> Nine months after the military coup in Argentina had ushered in a wave of state terror, the Ford assessment emphasized rights violations by left- as well as right-wing terrorists. Although the report acknowledged the suspension of *habeas corpus* and the indefinite detention of suspects, it sought to minimize the mili-

tary's direct responsibility for abuses. According to the report, the governments of Isabel Perón and General Jorge Videla had "reportedly acquiesced in violations attributable to persons associated with the government." Continuing a longstanding military relationship with Argentina, the Ford administration requested \$36 million in arms credits and \$700,000 in military training funds for the coming year. U.S. military aid, the administration argued,

"orients the Argentine military professionally toward the United States...[and] in return, it offers the United States the possibility of improved communication with the Argentine military, *who have always influenced events in their country and are now the dominant sector.*" [emphasis added]<sup>14</sup>

The Carter administration changed the parameters of debate by singling out Argentina, as well as Uruguay and Ethiopia, for public criticism of their human rights practices. Scarcely a month after President Carter took office proclaiming that "our commitment to human rights must be absolute,"<sup>15</sup> Secretary of State Cyrus Vance announced that the administration was reducing arms credits to Argentina from \$36 million to \$15 million, less than half the amount proposed by the Ford administration during its final months in office. In reaction to the announcement, Argentina, along with Brazil, El Salvador, and Guatemala, rejected U.S. assistance outright, claiming that criticism of human rights abuses constituted interference in their internal affairs. These rejections led several congressional committees to strip pending foreign aid legislation of funds for military credit sales to these four countries. Efforts to enact a more comprehensive ban on military aid to Argentina, however, continued through the spring, summer, and fall of 1977.

The first effort to end military aid to Argentina took place on the House floor on May 23, 1977. During consideration of the International Security Assistance Act of 1977 (the military aid authorization bill), Rep. Gerry Studds (D-Massachusetts) offered an amendment to prohibit military training funds as well as government-to-government and private sales of weapons for cash and credit. Calling Argentina the "single most repressive regime receiving assistance under this bill,"<sup>16</sup> Studds argued that he could not "even begin to list the examples of murder, repression, and torture" carried out by the military since the March 1976 coup. Then, making the impact of U.S. assistance concrete, he enumerated some of the

courses to be provided to the Argentine military using U.S. aid: urban counterinsurgency, military intelligence, and interrogation techniques. He further revealed that the head of the notorious Argentine intelligence service, the State Intelligence Agency (SIDE), had received U.S. training in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.<sup>17</sup> Studds challenged his colleagues in an impassioned floor speech to demonstrate any way that the “further training of the military of that repressive government promotes the security of the United States...or promotes the interests of the people of our country or the interest of the people of Argentina.”<sup>18</sup>

Other supporters of the ban offered equally passionate arguments in its favor. Rep. Robert Drinan, S.J. (D-Massachusetts), who had accompanied an Amnesty International delegation to Argentina in November 1976, inserted portions of Amnesty's report into the *Congressional Record*, and excoriated the regime for failing to publish a list of the thousands who had disappeared. Drinan noted that the leftwing terrorists by whose actions the Argentine government justified its repression had, by the admission of President Jorge Videla himself, been virtually wiped out.<sup>19</sup> Describing the torture practiced by the regime, Rep. Toby Moffett (D-Connecticut) insisted “we cannot be neutral...Either we vote them this aid...and put our stamp of approval on their government, or we refuse to do it. There is no in-between.”<sup>20</sup> Rep. Ted Weiss (D-New York) argued that adopting the ban would “affect the treatment of individuals in Argentina,” and “pressure Videla to drop these terrorizing techniques.”<sup>21</sup>

Leading the opposition to the Studds amendment was the chair of the House International Relations Committee, Rep. Clement Zablocki (D-Wisconsin). Acknowledging Studds' “good intentions,” Zablocki nonetheless called “an extreme or excessively rigid commitment to human rights...counterproductive.” Echoing the arguments of the Carter administration, Zablocki called for a “balanced and prudent approach, one that allows for private diplomatic efforts and flexibility.” The administration was seeking human rights improvements through “quiet diplomatic overtures,” he said, and as part of that effort, “the executive branch believes that it is clearly in the interest of the United States to maintain access to and a dialog with the Argentine armed forces.”<sup>22</sup> Senior Republicans on the International Relations Committee reflected other administration views. Rep. Robert Lagomarsino (R-California) noted that “an alternative to the current Argentine Government could very eas-

ily be another military regime which would be more repressive and less willing to accept American representations for improved respect for human rights.”<sup>23</sup> Rep. Benjamin Gilman (R-New York), the highest-ranking Republican on the Subcommittee on Inter-American Affairs, quoted Assistant Secretary of State Terence Todman, who, in an appearance before the subcommittee, argued that “it is better to leave us with flexibility to use the methods at the moment that are best suited to achieving” policy goals.<sup>24</sup>

The Studds amendment failed, 187-200, but the narrow margin of 13 votes identified a small group of “swing voters” that human rights activists on and off Capitol Hill could target (an additional 46 members were absent during the vote). Lobbying groups including the liberal Americans for Democratic Action, the Human Rights Working Group of the Coalition for a New Foreign and Military Policy, the Argentine Commission on Human Rights (led by a former political prisoner in Argentina), and the Anti-Defamation League of the B’nai B’rith stepped up their efforts, setting the stage for future votes. Less than a month later, on June 22, 1977, the House reversed itself, approving by a wide 223-180 margin a more limited amendment offered by Rep. Edward Roybal (D-California) to cut military training funds. As during the May debate, opponents of the aid cut argued against “ty[ing] the hands of our diplomats who seek to bring about constructive change,”<sup>25</sup> and painted General Videla as a moderate struggling against extreme right-wing generals poised to seize power.<sup>26</sup> Proponents of the aid cut offered further details of the torture, disappearance, and anti-Semitism practiced by the regime, and went so far as to argue that since the military was “in complete control of all police functions,” U.S. aid was illegal given the 1974 legislation banning aid to foreign police forces.<sup>27</sup>

In explaining the House reversal between May and June 1977, former lobbyists and congressional staffers recalled that Studds was a junior member of the International Relations Committee as well as a newcomer to foreign affairs issues, whereas Roybal was a more senior legislator on the Appropriations Committee. The more compelling reason, however, appears related to the lobbying effort, and particularly to positions taken by the Assembly of Argentine Bishops, the U.S. Catholic Conference, the National Council of Churches, the Jewish Argentine Association, and the Anti-Defamation League of the B’nai B’rith, all highlighting issues of religious



persecution as among the pervasive human rights abuses.<sup>28</sup> Fully 42 members of Congress who voted against the Studds amendment in May voted in favor of the Roybal amendment in June, and the switchers included conservatives from both political parties.<sup>29</sup> Only six members of Congress switched their votes in the opposite direction, from an anti-aid to a pro-aid position.

While the bulk of human rights initiatives on Argentina emanated from the House, key actions in the Senate shaped the final outcome of 1977 aid debates. On June 15, 1977, during consideration of the military aid authorization bill, Sen. Kennedy attempted a comprehensive ban on weapons credits, sales and training to Argentina, arguing that the Argentina prohibition would be the same as the Chile ban enacted by Congress in 1975 and 1976. And, addressing a central argument in the Carter administration's arsenal—that the denial of assistance would impair U.S. influence in bringing about reform—Kennedy insisted that “there are also countries in which any limited influence we might have is dwarfed by systematic violation of basic human rights.”<sup>30</sup> Following a limited debate, and sensing that he might not have the votes to enact a comprehensive prohibition, Kennedy accepted a less restrictive substitute offered by Sen. Hubert Humphrey (D-Minnesota), the chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee's Subcommittee on Foreign Assistance. The Humphrey substitute, which passed by voice vote, postponed the cutoff for a year (it would take effect after September 30, 1978), and did not affect pipeline deliveries. This Senate provision was incorporated into the final military assistance authorization bill, approved by the Congress in July and signed into law on August 4, 1977.<sup>31</sup>

The debate over military aid to Argentina culminated in a final moment of drama in September–October 1977, when members of the House and Senate met in conference to reconcile differing versions of the foreign aid appropriations legislation passed in each chamber. Initially, Senate members of the conference committee refused to incorporate the language of the Roybal amendment (banning military training) into the final version of the bill. Nor could conferees agree on provisions to cut military credit sales to Argentina, Brazil, El Salvador, and Guatemala, the four countries that had rejected U.S. aid. The conference report thus returned to the House and Senate floors devoid of any restrictions on military assistance to Argentina, a lapse that infuriated members of the House who had fought hard to include such provisions.

In early October, the House took a highly unusual step: it rejected the conference report, the approval of which is usually a routine matter, and sent the report back to the conference committee, insisting on the restoration of the military training ban and the restriction in military sales credits, among other provisions. In essence, members of the House were holding the entire foreign aid appropriations bill hostage to the inclusion of the Argentina prohibitions.<sup>32</sup> The Senate ultimately acceded to the House position in mid-October, and the final legislation was signed by President Carter on October 31, 1977. The prohibition remained in effect until 1981, when the Reagan administration sought to repeal the restrictions as a way of rewarding authoritarian regimes friendly to the United States and cooperative with the anti-communist crusades in places such as Central America.<sup>33</sup>

What was the effect of the legislation restricting military aid to Argentina? There are objective as well as subjective answers to this question. Objectively, the most dire predictions of aid supporters—that a cut-off would undermine moderates in the military junta and encourage hard-liners to seize power and unleash even more brutal forms of repression—did not materialize. Analysts differ, however, as to whether and how much the withholding of assistance resulted in concrete improvements in the human rights situation. As John Dinges and Tex Harris argue elsewhere in this volume, human rights conditions, particularly as reflected in the rate of disappearances, remained appallingly high for at least another year, even if the absolute numbers of disappearances declined. Kathryn Sikkink and others, meanwhile, have taken the opposite position, maintaining that human rights conditions in Argentina improved from 1978 onward, precisely because international pressures forced the Argentine government to take steps to repair its international image, in order to restore needed loans as well as flows of economic and military aid.<sup>34</sup> As Sikkink has argued in an earlier chapter, repression is a choice that governments make in the context of ideology and costs and benefits. Seen in this light, the actions of the Congress influenced junta members' assessments of the costs of repression, a perception that would have been heightened had the Carter policy been more consistent.

Equally difficult to assess but just as significant is the symbolic importance of the cut-off. Even while the Carter administration sought a rapprochement with the military regime and sought to marginalize the administration's own most persistent human rights defenders,<sup>35</sup> the U.S.

Congress sent an unequivocal—and, in the context of foreign aid policy, highly unusual—message of condemnation, identifying the practices of the military junta as simply beyond the pale of civilized nations. That this message offered encouragement to democratic and human rights activists within Argentina, particularly those with international connections, has been widely acknowledged, even if the credit is most often given to the Carter administration rather than to the Congress or to the non-governmental organizations that supported its decision. How much the Argentine public in general knew about the aid cut—whether, given the history of U.S. support for military regimes during the Cold War, perceptions of U.S. policy *vis-à-vis* the junta changed—appears less important than the aid cut's impact on a small but politically significant group of Argentine actors pressing for human rights and democratic change.

A second area of impact of the aid cut-off concerns the United States itself. The human rights initiatives of the 1970s unfolded during a particular moment in the Cold War, marked by the collapse of the post-World War II U.S. foreign policy consensus based on containment. Human rights initiatives flourished as a reaction *against* the automatic association with foreign regimes solely on the basis of their anti-communism, and, in the unique period after Vietnam, helped reestablish an idealistic foundation for U.S. foreign policy based on moral values. At no time, however—not even in the heyday of human rights activism on and around Capitol Hill—did human rights considerations determine U.S. foreign policy when other national security or economic interests were viewed as over-riding.

The Argentina debates of the mid-1970s—along with earlier ones over Chile and Uruguay—thus appear in retrospect as an aberration. For an extremely short period of time, a small group of liberals in Congress, actively supported by non-governmental organizations, was able to mobilize a congressional majority that kept the U.S. government from materially aiding a repressive regime. By the end of the decade, world and regional events—the seizure of U.S. hostages in Iran, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the Sandinista victory in Nicaragua, and burgeoning insurgency in El Salvador—thrust Cold War national security considerations back to the forefront of U.S. foreign policy concerns. The administration of President Ronald Reagan in 1981 openly declared that “international terrorism will take the place of human rights;”<sup>36</sup> in his first months in office, Reagan nominated an assistant secretary for human

rights who showed open contempt for the issue, stepped up military aid to the abusive Salvadoran government, sought to repeal the Argentina aid prohibition, and organized—with the cooperation of the Argentine military junta—a counterrevolutionary force to depose the Sandinista regime.<sup>37</sup> Human rights liberals could no longer muster the votes to block aid, but could limit and at times succeed in placing conditions on aid that contributed to human rights improvements over time.<sup>38</sup>

Attaching enduring significance to the Argentina debates is thus difficult. It is surely cold comfort to the tens of thousands who suffered at the hands of military regimes to know that human rights have become a permanent aspect of foreign policy discourse, in the United States as well as abroad. More significant, it seems, are the lessons not learned, and the enduring temptation to jettison human rights norms in the face of national security threats, real and imagined.

## NOTES

1. I am grateful to Ariel Armony, Ramón Tasat, Don Wolfensberger, Bruce Cameron, and Bill Woodward for their perceptive and helpful comments.

2. Much of the background for this discussion is drawn from Cynthia J. Arnson, *Crossroads: Congress, the President, and Central America, 1976-1993* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993, 2d edition.)

3. The Fiscal Year 1975 foreign aid authorization bill, passed by the Congress in 1974, limited assistance to Chile to \$25 million and specified that none of it was to be used for military assistance. That same year, the Senate, by a narrow margin, adopted an amendment offered by Senator Kennedy to prohibit all military assistance, given “the complete violation of human rights and human liberties which has been the record.” (Cited in *Congressional Quarterly Almanac*, 1974, p. 550.) All forms of military assistance, including cash and commercial sales, were terminated in 1976, although economic aid continued for several years. “Pipeline” sales—goods contracted for but as yet undelivered—were also unaffected.

4. Hersh’s articles, the first of which appeared on September 8, 1974, discussed top-secret hearings held by the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Intelligence in April of that year. According to Hersh, then-CIA Director William Colby told the Committee that the Nixon administration had authorized over \$8 million for covert activities in Chile between 1970-1973 in an effort to bring down Allende’s government.

Extensive new material about the covert efforts against Allende and subsequent support for the Pinochet dictatorship appears in Peter Kornbluh, *The Pinochet File: A Declassified Dossier on Atrocity and Accountability* (New York: The New Press, 2003), released on the 30th anniversary of the coup against Allende.

## The Dirty War's Declassified Documents

5. These included CIA spying on U.S. citizens during the Vietnam War, in violation of the CIA's charter, and assassination plots against foreign leaders.

6. The Church Committee found "no hard evidence of direct U.S. assistance to the 1973 coup," but said that given the nature of U.S. contacts with the Chilean military, and the extent of U.S. opposition to Allende, the U.S. government "probably gave the impression that it would not look with disfavor on a military coup." Quoted in *Congressional Quarterly Almanac*, 1975, pp. 398-399.

7. The name of the Committee on Foreign Affairs was changed to the Committee on International Relations in March 1975.

8. Between 1973 and 1978, the Fraser subcommittee held over 150 hearings and heard from over 500 witnesses. See John P. Salzberg (Fraser's former aide), "A View from the Hill: U.S. Legislation and Human Rights," in David D. Newsom, *The Diplomacy of Human Rights* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1986), pp. 13-20.

9. *Congressional Quarterly Almanacs*, 1974, 1975, and 1976. A detailed discussion of congressional initiatives regarding human rights appears in Lars Schoultz, *Human Rights and United States Policy Toward Latin America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), which remains the single best treatment of the subject. See also, Margaret E. Crahan, ed. *Human Rights and Basic Needs in the Americas* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1982); and Vita Bite, "Human Rights and U.S. Foreign Policy," Issue Brief No. IB77056, Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, October 26, 1977.

10. One of the key congressional staff members to work on the ban was Tom Daschle, then an aide to Sen. Jim Abourezk (D-South Dakota). Daschle was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1986 and has served as its Majority and Minority Leader.

11. The sponsor of the amendment, Rep. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa), was one of the "Watergate babies" elected in 1974. As was characteristic of the time, he was not assigned to any of the House committees with oversight of foreign policy or foreign aid.

12. Like Section 502B, the Harkin amendment defined gross violations as "torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment, prolonged detention without charges, or other flagrant denial of the right to life, liberty, and the security of the person."

13. *Congressional Quarterly Almanac*, 1977, p. 364.

14. *Ibid.*

15. Quoted in *Congressional Quarterly Almanac*, 1977, p. 322.

16. *Congressional Record*, May 23, 1977, p. 15891.

17. The officer was Gen. Carlos Laidlaw.

18. *Congressional Record*, May 23, 1977, p. 15898.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 15901.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 15900.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 15895.

22. *Ibid.*, pp. 15898-99.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 15899.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 16903.
25. Comments of Rep. Benjamin Gilman, *Congressional Record*, June 22, 1997, p. 20280.
26. This latter argument was made forcefully in a May 25, 1997, *New York Times* editorial, "Avoiding the Worst in Argentina."
27. Remarks of Rep. Edward Roybal, *Congressional Record*, June 22, 1977, p. 20278.
28. Telephone interviews, Bill Woodward, former aide to Rep. Gerry Studds, July 28, 2003; and Bruce Cameron, former lobbyist, Americans for Democratic Action, July 30, 2003. Morton Rosenthal, formerly of the Anti-Defamation League, described ADL advocacy efforts in the United States, including a campaign that urged U.S. citizens to contact members of Congress on behalf of Argentine political prisoners. Telephone interview, October 23, 2003.
29. One of the switchers to an anti-aid position was Rep. Dan Quayle (R-Indiana), a junior member of the International Relations Committee and subsequently Vice President of the United States, 1989-1992.
30. *Congressional Record*, June 15, 1977, p. 19269.
31. Public Law 95-92, Section 620B, "Prohibition Against Assistance and Sales to Argentina," August 4, 1977.
32. To be sure, there were other disagreements between the House and Senate versions, but the Argentina provisions were the most hotly debated.
33. On Argentine involvement in Central America, see Ariel Armony, *Argentina, the United States, and the Anti-Communist Crusade in Central America, 1977-1984* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1997).
34. This argument is made in Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998), especially pp. 103-110. Emphasizing the interplay between domestic and international factors, Sikkink and Keck maintain that the international condemnation by the United States as well as European countries whose citizens had been murdered or taken prisoner was important given divisions within the junta itself over how much repression was "necessary."
35. See Carlos Osorio's and Tex Harris' contributions earlier in this volume.
36. The words were those of Secretary of State Alexander Haig at a January 1981 news conference.
37. The Reagan administration sought an unconditional repeal of the ban on U.S. military aid to Argentina, arguing that rights abuses had declined. Lacking the votes to maintain the ban, House and Senate liberals attempted but failed to condition a resumption of aid on a full accounting of the disappeared. Congress agreed to lift the prohibition if the president certified that Argentina had made significant progress in complying with internationally recognized human rights and that military aid or sales were in the U.S. national interest. See *Congressional Quarterly Almanac*, 1981, pp. 153-183.
38. This was the case, for example, of the human rights certification on El Salvador.

**PART TWO**

**ARGENTINA-U.S. BILATERAL  
RELATIONS: FUTURE CHALLENGES**





JOSEPH S. TULCHIN

Most of us in Washington follow the news very closely, and it is an understatement to say that in the current climate, it is very difficult to find anything in the press concerning a country that is not in the Middle East. Finding time on the public agenda has always been an issue for those who study Latin America. It is important to remember that this does not mean that there is no interest within the policy community in what is happening in Latin America. People all over town spend their time considering, discussing, analyzing and debating issues in Latin America. The problem is to try to capture the attention of those who are making decisions about United States foreign policy and to provide them with information that is relevant to the issues under consideration. With that fact in mind, the Wilson Center's Latin American Program has set up a program on Argentina, to hold regular meetings on issues that go beyond the immediate fiscal crisis and default.

About ten years ago, I published a book on U.S.- Argentine relations, the thesis of which was that the Argentine leadership had inserted the country into the world at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in a manner that attempted to take advantage of its then-comparative advantage in the export to Europe of primary agricultural products, particularly grains and beef.<sup>1</sup> I also argued that Argentina's insertion was shaped by a sometimes explicit, but more often implicit, urge to compete with the United States. Indeed, the more optimistic Argentines at the beginning of the 20th century were convinced that Argentina would soon overtake the United States as the principal power in the Western hemisphere. I argued that this assumption was flawed in two respects. First, it assumed that global trade was both a necessary and sufficient measure of a nation's power and influence in world affairs, a position no other nation aspiring to influence in the global arena would have maintained. Second and more significant, as the first half of the twentieth century unfolded, Argentina's insertion and

the model it represented became increasingly divorced from any realistic appreciation of world affairs. Several leaders, most notably President Hipólito Yrigoyen (1916-1922; 1928-1930) adopted what has been called a principled or ethical view of foreign policy, which rejected realist categories of power, and asserted that Argentina could exercise leadership in the world through adherence to certain principles in foreign policy and that its influence would be based on adherence to these principles and to the value of its exports.

In the context of the First World War and the pronouncements of President Woodrow Wilson that a nation's foreign policy should be based on its moral values and principles, particularly democracy, Yrigoyen's position seemed to echo debates in Europe and elsewhere. The resonance of this position was called into question when Yrigoyen demanded that the League of Nations reform itself before it began its work of peacemaking, and, when the League's assembly refused to take up his reform proposals, instructed the Argentine representative to withdraw. Over time, it became increasingly clear that adherence to principles in Argentina had replaced an objective appraisal of what was happening in the world. The point was not that the principles were bad, or that taking a principled, idealist position in world affairs was (or is) bad. Rather, that Argentina's approach was rendered ineffective by an inability to link the principles with what was happening elsewhere in the world.

The administration of President Carlos Saúl Menem (1989-1999) attempted to overturn this historic trend by associating Argentina with the United States and by reinserting Argentina in the world through the intimate relationship it had with the United States. Interestingly, the phrase commonly associated with that policy—"carnal relations"—was not Menem's or that of then-foreign minister Domingo Cavallo. Rather, the phrase was coined by Argentina's ambassador in Washington, Guido Di Tella (who later became foreign minister). The problem with the shift in Argentine foreign policy was not that becoming friendly with or associating Argentina with the United States represented a bad decision. Rather, in strategic terms, there was no evidence of a rethinking of the reinsertion of Argentina in world affairs, no judgment using realist parameters as to how Argentina's national interest would be maximized or its foreign policy objectives achieved through this new foreign policy. Menem simply wanted to make Argentina a more economically accessible

market, and the only way to do that was to become a more reliable partner of the chief economic power in the world, the United States.

Throughout the 1990s, the debate in Argentina over relations with the United States centered on the significance of that famous phrase, *relaciones carnales*. Argentine support for the United States was to be unconditional. Opposition arose over whether Argentina was subjecting itself to the United States in an unseemly manner, or whether the country was failing to evaluate the virtues and the defects of such an alignment. And much of that criticism was fair. From my point of view, the central question for Argentine foreign policy should have been, and should be, what strategic model Argentines are envisioning as they project their country into the future and maximize its interests in world affairs. That is the principal challenge for the new government in Argentina. The government of President Eduardo Duhalde had excruciatingly difficult short-term challenges to face, and spent vast amounts of human energy accomplishing those goals. Given the context, I think the government had remarkable success, and Argentine Ambassador to the United States Eduardo Amadeo played a key role. Successfully negotiating with the IMF was not a trivial accomplishment; implementing the program known as *jefes y jefas de familia* has been a marked success; the achievement of social peace was not easy to accomplish. And we should never tire of reminding one another that the crisis has been resolved by a civilian, constitutional government. For those of us who have spent many years in Argentina and elsewhere in Latin America, the fact that the crisis was resolved without military intervention is a signal success. The weakness of Argentine democratic institutions has been manifest throughout this crisis. But they have bent, not broken. With any luck, in the future these institutions will straighten and become increasingly legitimate.

In terms of foreign policy, the Duhalde administration relied heavily on the energetic leadership of Undersecretary of State Martín Redrado. But for anyone who has studied Argentine history, the notion of a foreign policy based on a comparative advantage in exports is reminiscent of the strategies of the oligarchies of the 1800s and the 1890s. So long as the country is so ferociously competitive—something that, because of the devaluation of the peso, will last probably until the end of 2004—one can assume that exports will continue to expand. But that is no way to build a foreign policy, and it certainly is not the basis for a strategic plan. What is

Argentina's identity in world affairs? This is a serious question. I hope that over the years of the presidency of Néstor Kirchner, Argentines will have sufficient space and self-confidence to engage in that debate publicly and to involve the media, the academy, Congress, and other analysts of the subject. This publication is a contribution to that debate; a contribution to the discussion of what Argentina can do in world affairs, and the values on which its role might be based.

## NOTE

1. Joseph S. Tulchin, *Argentina and the United States: A Conflicted Relationship* (Boston: Twayne, 1990).

## CHAPTER 10

JUAN GABRIEL TOKATLIÁN

*“Contando con los medios apropiados para ello, es posible organizar la estupidez en gran escala”<sup>1</sup>*

—Bertolt Brecht, 1937

The purpose of my presentation is to evaluate Argentina’s foreign policy towards the United States, particularly in light of the change in Argentina’s foreign policy in the last decade and a half.

Change is an issue that is seldom analyzed or studied by foreign policy analysts, and there is only a small body of literature on the subject. In that respect, Argentina’s foreign policy provides an excellent example for the study of change. Scholars such as Jakob Gustavsson<sup>2</sup> identified three conditions associated with change, which occurs when 1) the fundamental structure and conditions of the world system undergo a major transformation; 2) a domestic crisis of some magnitude erupts that demands resolution; and 3) a strategic political leadership emerges. In Argentina in 1989–1990, all three of these elements coincided: a major structural change in the international scenario—the end of the Cold War; a major domestic crisis—hyperinflation; and a new strategic leadership signified by the inauguration of President Carlos Menem, whose project involved a reordering of Argentine politics, economics, and foreign policy.

The Argentine case is useful to examine because it provides an actual rather than a merely theoretical basis for analyzing change in foreign policy. For many years Argentine analysts argued that the country needed to change its foreign policy because so many mistakes had been made both during and after the Second World War. Therefore, Buenos Aires was supposed to shift its international policy and modify its insertion into world affairs. We can now analyze and evaluate that shift in foreign policy, as the time frame it encompasses is sufficiently long: the year 2003 marks the fourteenth year of the shift; that is, by my count, a generation.

I would like to emphasize two key assertions. First, the change inaugurated a new foreign policy model that can best be labeled “pragmatic

acquiescence” (not Argentine “new” realism).<sup>3</sup> This model of foreign policy adaptation is based both on a perceived lack of alternatives and on a self-imposed subordination to an external actor. Adaptation and acquiescence are directed towards two different external actors: one, a state actor, the United States, and the other a non-governmental actor, financial capital. This policy was not the result of a conspiracy developed in the Palacio San Martín; nor was it managed by anyone on the seventh floor of the State Department. The policy of “pragmatic acquiescence” was self-created and self-imposed by Argentines, even though it was welcomed by official (the White House and the Pentagon) and financial (the IMF and the World Bank) Washington, as well as by Wall Street in New York, all of which profited handsomely and disproportionately. This model of “pragmatic acquiescence,” however, lacked any sense of realism.

The second argument is that foreign policy should not be evaluated on the basis of short-term dividends, individual gains, or limited sectoral benefits. Rather, foreign policy should always be evaluated in the medium- to long-run, in terms of enhancing collective well-being and a country’s national security. Measured by these criteria, Argentine foreign policy over the last fourteen years has been a total failure. Internationally, Argentina today is weaker, less relevant, and more amenable to blackmail than twenty years ago. And domestically, Argentina is more impoverished, more fragmented, and more unequal than it was in the mid-1970s.

Notwithstanding this absolute failure, I predict that there will be no policy backlash; instead, there will be some degree of reform in the years to come. A major foreign policy reorganization or reorientation will not take place. Even though there has been an important international change marked by the effects of September 11<sup>th</sup> and the abrupt end of the post-Cold War *interregnum*, and even though Argentina is confronting a major domestic crisis (the post-“*convertibilidad*” nightmare), the presence of a new strategic leadership is still in question. There maybe reform—gradual, selective, and symbolic—but not a revolution of any kind in the near future. However, continuity in foreign policy—that is, “*menemismo sin Menem*” as practiced by President Fernando de la Rúa and his *Alianza* government—bodes trouble in the medium term. Extreme radicalism and anti-Americanism are not on the horizon. *Reformismo* in foreign policy may be possible. The perpetuation of a disguised version of “pragmatic acquiescence” may turn out to be a recipe for disaster in the years to come.

Contrary to what has been claimed by most Argentine and many U.S. scholars, Argentina's recent foreign policy was not an adapted, enlightened, peripheral version of realism in international politics. Instead Argentina's foreign policy over the last fifteen years has been a mixture of naïve neo-liberalism and imprudent utilitarianism. The failure of the foreign policy model of pragmatic acquiescence is rooted in at least five flawed and unrealistic assumptions.

First, for defenders and promoters of the policy of pragmatic acquiescence, measures of success were externally driven. An unrestricted alignment with the United States was supposed to re-empower and help Argentina. But this is not realism. Consider, for example, Mastanduno, Lake, and Ikenberry's proposition regarding a realist foreign policy: "as the long-term power of a nation-state declines, the state will increase its internal mobilization."<sup>4</sup> The basic idea is that a state in decline should seek to mobilize internal resources in order to expand domestic wealth. By 1989 Argentina was clearly a declining nation-state. Instead of empowering the state and the society domestically, instead of improving the level of legitimacy of the political system, and instead of investing in power internally, Argentine policymakers believed that the solution to the country's ongoing decadence was externally based and linked to a clear alignment with the United States. This is exactly the opposite of what a policy of realism would suggest for a country that was experiencing a notable erosion of power.

Second, part of the justification for Argentina's jumping on the U.S. bandwagon was also externally motivated. Most Argentines and many Americans used a neo-realist argument to explain and justify Argentina's decision to associate itself with the United States. Following implicitly Stephen Walt's notion of a balance of threat<sup>5</sup> instead of the balance of power (*à la* Waltz), they argued that "bandwagoning" was consistent with a non-threatening, benevolent superpower, the United States. A second neo-realist premise was derived from Samuel Huntington's notion of hegemony,<sup>6</sup> by which, at a regional level, a second-tier power such as Argentina has no alternative but to differentiate itself from the first-tier regional power (Brazil), and thus align itself with the major power (the United States).

The vast majority of Argentine and American scholars never took into consideration domestic factors for explaining Argentina's close relationship

with the United States. As many analysts—for example, Deborah Welch and Randall Schweller—have argued,<sup>7</sup> internal variables are critical for understanding a decision to bandwagon. Issues such as weak institutions, fragile national identity, low domestic legitimacy, opportunism, the search for profits, and elite self-perpetuation are fundamental in explaining a policy of strict alliance *vis-à-vis* a great power. These domestic factors were present in the Argentine case and domestic rationality helps account for the decision to bandwagon with Washington (and Wall Street).

Third, in terms of diplomatic style, some put forth the argument that Argentina needed to be overwhelming and indiscriminate in its support for the United States. But the combination of over-reacting and free-riding is not at all what realism would suggest; rather, a country should be more prudent in its foreign policy and carefully measure costs and benefits. Negotiations are not conducted on the basis of absolute harmony; one needs discord in order to bargain and arrive at a compromise. Argentina tripled the coincidence of its votes with those of the United States at the United Nations, supported Washington policy on Cuba, was at one time the best showcase for the “Washington Consensus” on neoliberal reforms, and followed Washington in the first war against Iraq. But in the end, this foreign policy of over-reaction neither resolved Argentina’s problems nor did it pay off in terms of improving U.S.-Argentine relations. At the critical moment of Argentina’s economic collapse, the United States appeared to care less about its only hemispheric, non-NATO ally. Argentina searched for dubious “*relaciones carnales*” with the United States; Washington paid with a severe “*relaciones descarnadas*,” signified by Buenos Aires’ downfall. A dramatic example of the U.S. attitude towards Argentina can be found in the September 2002 U.S. National Security Strategy. The document explains, among other things, why and how the United States has opted for flexible coalitions. In the Western hemisphere, Washington is willing to form coalitions with countries that share its “priorities;” that is, Canada, Mexico, Brazil, Chile, and Colombia.<sup>8</sup> Argentina, the most outspoken, subordinate ally in the region is not even mentioned as a reliable partner. The overreacting and free riding that characterized Buenos Aires’ foreign policy was not only costly, but in the end quite useless.

Fourth, Argentine policy makers wrongly believed that the key source for national and international empowerment was the market and not the



state. The fundamental notion was that Argentina should open its economy and that a better insertion in world affairs would come about through market mechanisms. This proved to be totally unrealistic. No great or middle power in world affairs has ever dismantled its state in order to gain a more prominent role in the international system. No state with significant leverage has survived by serving as a kind of financial epicenter for short-term speculation. There is no major or influential or medium-sized country that does not have a catalyzing, significant, strong state and an economically productive project to sustain its role in global politics. Argentina had neither.

Fifth, and finally, Argentina's foreign policy was based on nostalgia. It was based more on illusion than on realism. During the Menem years and even after Menem, Argentine foreign policy looked to the past. The reference points for foreign policy were linked to the period between 1880 and 1920, an era in which Argentina was ascending into the world scene, and during which the country was richer and more successful. The foreign policy of the 1990s was rooted in the illusion of a return to those years. It was unrealistic in the sense that it did not take into consideration Argentina's recent and current material and non-material conditions.

To conclude, from the viewpoint of the collective national interest, the Argentine model of "pragmatic acquiescence" was negative and even tragic. The most important lesson from this failed strategy is the following: the best (and most realistic) Argentine foreign policy should start with good domestic policy. To base international policy on a good domestic policy, Argentina needs to empower its institutions, develop a coherent national identity, generate an industrial strategy, and become more competent, mature, and moderate in its conduct of foreign policy. Argentina does not need a policy based on overreaction, nor does it need to reinsert itself in world affairs through the United States or any other country. What it needs, rather, in order to avoid a backlash at home and abroad, is a well-structured, reformed foreign policy.

## NOTES

1. "Given sufficient means, it is possible to organize stupidity on a grand scale."
2. See, Jakob Gustavsson, *The Politics of Foreign Policy Change: Explaining the Swedish Reorientation on EC Membership* (Ph.D. Dissertation, Lund University, 1998).

3. See Roberto Russell y Juan G. Tokatlián, “El lugar del Brasil en la política exterior de la Argentina: La visión del otro,” in *Desarrollo Económico*, Vol. 42, No. 167, octubre-diciembre de 2002.
4. Michael Mastanduno, David A. Lake, and J. G. Ikenberry, “Towards a Realist Theory of State Action,” *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 33, No. 4, December 1989, p. 465.
5. See Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*, (New York: Cornell University Press, 1987).
6. See Samuel P. Huntington, “The Lonely Superpower,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 78, 1999.
7. See Deborah Welch Larson, “Bandwagoning Images in American Foreign Policy: Myth or Reality?” in Robert Jervis and Jack Snyder (eds.), *Dominos and Bandwagons: Strategic Beliefs and Great Power Competition in the Eurasian Rimland* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); and Randall L. Schweller, “Bandwagoning for Profit,” in Michael Brown, Sean Lynn-Jones, and Steven Miller (eds.), *The Perils of Anarchy: Contemporary Realism and International Security* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995).
8. The White House, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2002), p. 10.

## CHAPTER 11

MARK FALCOFF

The topic of this discussion is a very large one, and when I was invited to participate I was somewhat at a loss to know how to say something substantial in the time allotted. I decided to be brief and also somewhat personal.

I went to Argentina for the first time thirty-five years ago. Nothing there has changed as much since as popular perceptions of the United States. When I was a student in Buenos Aires in the 1960s I was frankly astounded at the prevailing misconceptions about my country. I was told we had only one university—Harvard. We ate hot dogs and hamburgers every night for dinner and washed them down with Coca Cola. New York was our only city with a cultural life. Europe was the *fons et origo* of all things bright and beautiful. With the exception of a handful of privileged people who had gone to British or Irish schools in Argentina, nobody could speak English. Few people had ever been to the United States, or even wished to go (except, as one young woman told me, “to see if it’s really as bad as they say.”)

To be sure, during the same period my fellow Americans knew nothing about Argentina—nothing at all. When I told people where I was going, they confused it with Brazil. Or they asked me if the food wouldn’t be too spicy.

Everything is different today. Argentines probably know Miami, Los Angeles and New York at least as well as they know Madrid, Paris or London. All the popular American brands are available in Argentina, and cable television has put some of our most deplorable cultural offerings at their immediate disposal. Worse still, they seem to like them. All my friends’ children speak English now, or rather, what I call MTV English. They speak it with positively frightening fluency. Thousands, perhaps even hundreds of thousands of Argentines have emigrated here, and many more dream of doing so.

Meanwhile, Americans remain almost as ignorant of Argentina as they were thirty-five years ago, their lack of curiosity slightly—but only slightly—dented by a Broadway musical subsequently made into a dreadful film. I regret this deficiency on the part of my fellow citizens, but I see no prospect of its improvement. Argentina is still a million miles away, of doubtful geopolitical or cultural importance—as far as they are concerned—and now, it would appear, not of much economic importance either.

Argentina's central problem since at least 1945 has been its lack of effective insertion into the international system. It was created—let us be frank—to provide Europe with meat and wheat during the later period of the industrial revolution. The collapse of the British Empire, the creation of the European Union, agricultural subsidies and non-tariff barriers both in Europe and the United States, and finally, the disappearance of the Soviet Union, have all conspired to shrink the potential market for Argentine exports. At the same time, Argentina has increasingly had to compete with other lower-cost areas for direct foreign investment.

This is a problem that far transcends its current difficulties with the United States, but given the centrality of the United States in the international economic system, relations with the United States remain fundamental, particularly in the field of financial services. For many years, U.S. markets were closed to Argentina's most important export, and although they have lately been opened, it is probably too late. At the same time, political and social structures (I mean, social safety nets and generous public services) put in place when Argentina was a far wealthier country have become increasingly difficult to maintain.

Over the last few years I have tried to imagine a new pact which would benefit both countries—a kind of modernized Roca-Runciman accord,<sup>1</sup> if you will, but one which—unlike the Roca-Runciman accord—would not be built on Argentina's relative economic dependency and weakness but rather on its potential for dynamic and creative growth, drawing on its remarkable human capital. I think the potential for such an agreement does exist, and, for the United States, could achieve an interesting end-run around Brazil's regional ambitions. But we do not think geopolitically, and the economic promise of such an agreement, in the short term, is simply not compelling enough to invite the kind of policy attention that it would require. The obscenely long delay in getting a free trade accord

with Chile—an eminently suitable trading partner—underscores the point. And Argentina's current economic and political situation does not encourage it, either.

Indeed, one might argue that until Argentina has forged a new social pact of its own—one that assures both growth and stability—there will be little incentive for the United States to bother with it. To be sure, one could just as easily argue that until and unless the United States lends a hand to the country and helps it out of the ditch into which it has fallen, no lasting social pact will be possible. A case of the chicken and the egg. One could imagine all kinds of U.S. long-term interests that would be served by such an action. But as we know, policymaking in the United States is driven entirely by momentary crises and obsessions.

None of which means that Washington will not have a long list of requests to make of Argentina—cooperation in the war on terror, cooperation in the drug war, troops for peacekeeping in the Balkans and other places yet to be identified, respect for our drug patents, votes in the OAS and the United Nations, and God knows what else. Some of these agendas mesh with Argentine objectives, some have nothing or almost nothing to do with them. I assume that the two countries will work together on some issues (like genetically altered foods) where their interests coincide. And presumably they will trade favors on others. But on many—far too many—issues Argentina will have no particular reason to nourish a special relationship with Washington.

The growing gap between the two countries is not unique to the U.S.-Argentine relationship. One sees it today with countries located far more centrally on the geopolitical map. Some will blame this on the Bush administration, but I share the view of Robert Kagan<sup>2</sup> that the current situation is shaped by structural considerations—the drastic asymmetry of power between the United States and other Western countries. This has produced a reaction which is literally worldwide, but cannot be wished or negotiated away. One presumes that even so, normal, even moderately productive relations between the United States and other countries will still be possible on a number of levels, and I hope and expect that Argentina will be one of them.

Let us turn to the challenges that face our two countries in the future.

*The first is the need to restore a measure of political and moral credibility.* Neither country quite believes in each other any more. On the Argentine

side, part of this is a natural reaction to the way the relationship was oversold during the Menem years. There was something not quite decent about it all, even when I liked very much of what Argentina was doing: the statement about “carnal relations” and “automatic alignment;” the three boats to the Persian Gulf; the excessively anxious solicitude to U.S. requests with regard to Haiti and Cuba. And helping to promote the atmosphere were such gestures as the designation of Argentina as a “non-NATO ally,” the effect of which, to my great astonishment, was to provoke anger in both Chile and Brazil.

At the same time, the Argentine economic miracle was greatly exaggerated in the U.S. financial press. There was a tendency to radically overstate the extent and profundity of the economic reforms enacted during those years. Very little was said about corruption, in spite of the ready availability of information on the subject in magazines like *Noticias*. And both the private banks and the international financial institutions took to believing their own propaganda about Argentina, extending yet further lines of credit when a more austere and skeptical approach would have been appropriate.

Since the onset of the current economic crisis Argentines have become deeply disillusioned with the United States, with its obvious indifference to their fate. And the United States, for its part, has started to ask questions about the way Argentina is run that should have been posed more than ten years ago. I believe those questions are appropriate, but not in a policy vacuum. There has to be something more to the relationship. Until Argentina has resumed productive economic activity, it can never be an important trading partner of the United States. Therefore, all U.S. policies should start from that point and work forward, instead of pretending that if Argentines simply tighten their belts another notch everything will be all right.

Having said that, I need to address very frankly the issue of Argentina’s political credibility in the United States. President Luis Battle of Uruguay so inopportunistically stated some months ago, speaking in what turned out to be (contrary to his understanding) an open microphone, that “Argentines are thieves, from the highest to the lowest.” He did apologize, but what he said is more widely perceived than many Argentines know. Indeed, a friend of mine at the International Monetary Fund told me in 2001 that the Fund had received over 10,000 e-mails from ordinary Argentine citizens urging that the Fund *not* give money to their government, which

officials would simply siphon off for their own personal use. As long as Argentines cannot find a political leadership in which they believe, it is unlikely that we are likely to do so.

*Second, we need to identify the areas where national interests coverage, while also addressing and trying to resolve outstanding differences.* As major food exporting countries, both of us take the same position on genetically altered crops. We both oppose nuclear proliferation. We are on the same side on human rights issues, both regionally and globally. We are both strong advocates of the democratic political system in our hemisphere. We both favor hemispheric economic integration. We cooperate within the framework of the Organization of American States and the inter-American defense community.

But obviously there are many other areas where we differ. One such is the issue of intellectual property. Another is agricultural subsidies and other non-tariff barriers to commerce. Another is immigration. Another is Argentina's claim to the Malvinas islands. My own impression of the bilateral relationship these past forty years is that—except for the issue of intellectual property, where we have often been confrontational—our diplomats have preferred to talk past these nettlesome points, apparently convinced they do not admit of resolution. I personally believe they do, *if we are serious about resolving them.* My only doubt is whether Washington in the present environment feels the game is worth a candle.

*Finally, I think that both countries have to decide exactly what is the significance of Argentina's membership in MERCOSUR.* I am well aware of the fact that officially, at least, MERCOSUR is nothing more than a large building block intended to form part of a larger FTAA<sup>3</sup> edifice. Not too many people I know really believe that. Rather, at least here in the United States, many of us see MERCOSUR as a Brazilian initiative the purpose of which is to create an alternative pole of attraction to the U.S.-led NAFTA in the north.

As long as the United States has nothing to offer Argentina, I see no reason why it should not take advantage of the best alternative available. Unquestionably at this point Brazil is a larger and more profitable market for Argentine producers than the United States or the United States plus Canada and Mexico. Nor do I criticize Brazil for pursuing its own national interest, which it typically understands better than most other countries, including, quite often, my own.

But I do suggest that at some point down the road it may be necessary for Argentina to choose between the two trading blocs. Much depends on the course of Brazil's own evolving evaluation of the hemispheric integration process. But it also depends on the capacity and willingness of the United States to address some of the outstanding issues I mentioned above. I hope that when and if the moment comes, both Argentina and the United States will be in a position to offer each other more than they do today.

## NOTES

1. An agreement between Argentina and Great Britain concluded in 1933 which admitted the former to a system of imperial preference which would otherwise have discriminated against it in trade matters. In exchange, Argentina agreed to give preferential treatment to British goods. The Pact was heavily criticized by Argentine nationalists, left and right, and forms part of the Peronist demonology of the conservative governments of the 1930s.

2. Kagan is author of the widely-discussed volume *Of Paradise and Power* (2002), whose most famous line is "Americans are from Mars, Europeans are from Venus."

3. The Free Trade Area of the Americas.



BEATRÍZ NOFAL

To examine future challenges in Argentine-U.S. bilateral relations, it is necessary first to examine the point of departure: the worst crisis in the modern economic history of Argentina.

The crisis has been most acute since the second half of 2001 and throughout 2002. Professor Guillermo Calvo<sup>1</sup> has referred to it as an unprecedented crisis in a country that did not experience a war.

The recession began in 1998. That turned into a depression, resulting ultimately in a financial crash. GDP has fallen an accumulated 19 percent since 1998 and 10.9 percent in 2002 only, with shocking social consequences. The recession initially brought down per capita GDP in Argentina from US\$8,500 in 1998 to US\$7,500 in 2001.

The deepening of the crisis and the collapse of the convertibility system has brought down per capita GDP to less than US\$3,000, given a 200 percent increase in the value of the dollar relative to the Argentine peso. As a result, Argentina has experienced tremendous social regression. More than fifty percent of the population is below the poverty line, and among these, twenty five percent live in conditions of extreme poverty. Argentina, the country that used to have the largest middle class in Latin America, has seen that middle class shrink dramatically.

The causes of this crisis are still the subject of intense debate. The view that there is a main single cause is simplistic: economic explanations focus on the fiscal deficit or the fixed exchange rate; the political economic perspective blames the market reforms of the 1990s; and the popular view assigns principal responsibility to the politicians. In my view, there are multiple and inter-related causes that led to the crisis, both economic and political, external and internal.

Briefly, the crisis resulted from a vicious cycle of external shocks and domestic vulnerabilities. The latter included a significant fiscal deficit, a large accumulated external debt (both in the public and private sectors), currency appreciation coupled with a rigid exchange rate system, mis-

takes in economic adjustment policy that served to deepen the crisis, the absence of an overall growth plan or development strategy, and problems of governance that interacted with and reinforced the downward spiral.

External shocks were also both economic and political. The most important external economic shocks involved the sudden halt of capital inflows in 1998 and the devaluation of the Brazilian *real* in 1999, the impact of which was magnified by the rigidity of Argentina's convertibility system. The most important external political shock was the change of policy in Washington regarding financial assistance packages to countries in distress.

The policy response, derived from "Moral Hazard Theory," was not to assist a country in financial distress, allowing an "exemplary default," so that lenders and borrowers do not expect rescue packages in the future. Implicit in this approach was the assumption that there would not be contagion effects or that contagion effects could be contained. This policy prescription—the decision not to assist—was applied to Argentina between November 2001 and the beginning of 2003, when the country finally signed an interim agreement with the IMF. However, in 2002 financial assistance packages were provided to countries with geopolitical importance, such as Turkey, or to countries neighboring Argentina, such as Uruguay and Brazil. These latter two were aimed at stopping contagion effects and financial crises in both countries, and at avoiding default. In early 2003, however, the former chief of economic research at the IMF, Kenneth Rogoff, admitted that there is not sufficient empirical evidence to support the "Moral Hazard Theory," because all the financial assistance packages provided on previous occasions had been re-paid to multilateral organizations, even at high interest rates.

The IMF decision not to assist Argentina was made before, not after, the default. In November 2001 the IMF refused to disburse a two billion dollar payment that had been previously agreed upon. That served as a catalyst for the run on bank deposits, which resulted in such ill-conceived measures as the freeze on deposits. These measures led to social disturbances that swept away a constitutionally elected president and resulted in the naming of a sequence of presidents. In the midst of a political crisis, Argentina went through a default and an unplanned devaluation, the forced and asymmetric conversion of dollar deposits and debts into pesos, and the rupture of numerous contracts.

The economy has started to rebound as of the last quarter of 2002, albeit precariously. On the social front, peace has been achieved. To move definitively beyond the crisis, however, Argentina needs to renew its political leadership. The new constitutionally elected government will have to carry out the daunting tasks of political and economic reconstruction. This will imply institutional strengthening, political reform, the restructuring of the external debt, and the development of a sustainable economic plan for Argentines, with cooperative international support.

What is a sustainable economic plan? One that restores growth with equity, maintains stability, strengthens fiscal solvency, recovers the value of the national currency (the peso), restructures and makes payments on the external debt in a sustainable fashion, strengthens the financial system, promotes trade and job creation, and addresses directly the issues of social inequity, massive poverty, and growing insecurity in Argentina. The new government has to clearly decide and communicate whether Argentina will address these challenges through greater integration in the world economy or through attempting to revert to the failed model of the past: populist economic schemes and inward-looking trade and investment policies. In my view, if Argentina remains in relative isolation, it will be difficult to resist the temptation of returning to the failed models of the past or to improve the quality of the democratic system, the workings of the market economy, and the rules for international integration. Therefore, Argentina needs closer cooperation, consultation, and collaboration with the United States and the rest of the international community. This does not mean subordination.

Since the return of democracy in the early 1980s, Argentina, like other Latin American countries, has made substantial progress on three fronts: 1) the restoration and consolidation of democracy, including respect for human rights, freedom of the press, and acceptance of transparent elections as the only acceptable way to gain and exercise power; 2) a process of economic reforms, by which the economy was organized along market lines, de-regulated, and opened to international trade and investment; and 3) regional and international integration involving the building of constructive alliances and partnerships, both at the regional and at the hemispheric level. In this latter regard, the two main achievements are MERCOSUR at the sub-regional level, and the negotiations over the FTAA, currently underway in the hemisphere.

The credibility of achievements on all three fronts—democratic restoration and consolidation, economic reform, and international integration—has substantially diminished because of the dismal economic situation and related social distress. An additional key factor is the perceived lack of commitment and reciprocity from Washington.

On the one hand, Argentines want to preserve democracy, something that is reflected in opinion polls. But as in most of Latin America, there is a loss of trust in democracy and democratic government, institutions, and political leaders. The political class is viewed more as a sort of aristocracy that lacks personal and programmatic renewal, than as a truly democratic leadership. In addition, the idea that market policies by themselves can produce growth, jobs, and social mobility has also lost credibility. And there is skepticism regarding the benefits derived from closer integration with the world economy and closer cooperation with the United States.

Given the situation described above, I believe that confronting future challenges in the U.S.-Argentina relationship must involve three principles: cooperation, consultation, and collaboration, in a balanced and not subordinated fashion.

These principles should apply to economic as well as political relations.

On the economic front, the two central issues are trade and development, on the one hand, and debt restructuring and finance, on the other. In fact, these two issues are related.

At the beginning of 2003, Argentina signed an interim agreement with the IMF lasting through the end of August 2003. In addition, Argentina was once again included in the U.S. generalized system of preferences. The main challenges, however, are threefold: the negotiation (by now successful) of a mid-term agreement with the IMF by the end of August 2003 or the beginning of September 2003; the re-negotiation and restructuring of the external debt that is in default (this is a complex process involving approximately US\$75 billion and extending into 2004 and perhaps beyond); and the conclusion of a successful and *balanced* free trade agreement for the region in 2005.

From the standpoint of U.S. policy towards Latin America, the conclusion of the FTAA by 2005 is of utmost importance. From the perspective of Argentina and MERCOSUR, what would a balanced FTAA look like? A balanced FTAA means first making substantial progress in the elimination of agricultural and agro-industrial subsidies and the elimina-

tion of non-tariff barriers. Until now, the position of the United States has been that these issues need to be dealt with in the World Trade Organization, because the issues are multilateral and involve other important actors such as the European Union and Japan, which also use subsidies and non-tariff barriers and thus produce market distortions.

However, there is no way to conclude a balanced agreement unless these issues are addressed within the FTAA. One of the reasons behind the lackluster economic performance of Argentina and other countries in Latin America that engaged in the economic reform process during the 1990s has to do with the failure of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations in 1995 to achieve a more balanced result with respect to developing countries. Had there been substantial liberalization and opening in the agricultural and agro-industrial sectors and in light industries such as shoes and textiles, the result for Latin America of the implementation of economic reforms inspired by the “Washington Consensus” might have been different.

In Argentina’s case, higher growth rates in agricultural and agro-industrial exports would have meant lower country risk. This, in turn, might have meant lower interest rates in the 1990s, and lower interest rates would have meant less indebtedness. The primary source of increased public expenditure in Argentina in the 1990s was the increase in interest rates on the foreign debt. Clearly, agricultural protectionism has had negative effects on Argentina that go beyond export losses, to include increased financial costs and greater poverty.

Thus, reforming the reform process and improving the development prospects of the industrializing world are not only domestic issues, but involve reforming and balancing the international institutions that deal with trade and finance.

A second issue for the FTAA—which is, after all, an exercise between developed and developing countries—concerns the wide disparities in income per capita. What would be the definition of a successful FTAA? One that accelerates the convergence of per capita income levels in the region. If an FTAA is implemented and results in a widening disparity in per capita income among developed and developing countries in the hemisphere, the agreement will be a failure.

What does it take for per capita income to converge? More open trade is a necessary but insufficient condition. In order to have not just the stat-

ic but the dynamic benefits of trade integration—productivity gains based on economies of scale and specialization, direct foreign investment, technology flows and the like—countries need finance and adequate infrastructure. Bolivia, for example, in spite of its labor cost advantages, is unlikely to experience a surge in foreign direct investment in the *maquila* sector or in the automotive industry (as did Mexico along its border with the United States), because Bolivia is not adequately connected physically with the rest of the continent or even with MERCOSUR: it has only two paved roads of access to MERCOSUR countries. Countries need infrastructure if they are to attract foreign investment and develop their comparative advantage, and this infrastructure must be financed.

The question of financing, both for infrastructure and for reallocation of resources and development, should be part of the FTAA agenda. Another issue that needs to be part of the hemispheric agenda involves assistance to displaced workers. In fact, if one looks at the provisions of trade promotion authority in the United States, a great deal of attention is devoted to internal assistance to displaced workers.

Regarding political relations, it is clear that September 11<sup>th</sup> represented a turning point in U.S. foreign policy, which since then has been focused on the war against terrorism. The United States has elaborated a new doctrine, positing that countries have a right to take action to protect their citizens when foreign states support or harbor international terrorists or are incapable of controlling terrorists operating from their territory. This implies a widening of the rationales for intervention: at first, it was expanded to include humanitarian purposes and now it is being expanded to deal with the new transnational security threat of terrorism.

Argentina has actively cooperated in the struggle against terrorism, not only in the 1990s but at the present. Argentina was the only country in Latin America to send ships to participate in Operation Desert Storm, an operation covered by the United Nations charter. Argentina also has cooperated with the United States after 9-11. Although Argentina did not get the credit—Brazil did—it was Argentina that rallied support in the Organization of American States for invoking the mutual assistance treaty, or TIAR, after the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks. Argentina took a more behind-the-scenes role because the government feared provoking further domestic divisions in a country that was already very fragmented.

If the United States wants Argentina or Latin America to become more engaged in the war against terrorism, the reverse is also true: Argentina and Latin America need more engagement and cooperation from the United States, to deal with internal and regional problems.

Argentina is actively cooperating in the war against terrorism at the multilateral, hemispheric, and sub-regional level—particularly evidenced by operations in controlling the Triple Frontier. Most Argentines, and indeed most Latin Americans, are uneasy with what has been called the preventive war against Iraq, an intervention that took place without the support of the United Nations Security Council. This uneasiness should not be confused with a false definition of neutrality. If there is a decision by the United Nations, the neutrality principle does not apply. Argentina is a member of the United Nations; as such, United Nations conventions and resolutions are part of Argentine law, and enforcement is mandatory. So if there is a decision by the United Nations to intervene, Argentina cannot be neutral. This issue also needs to be considered as part of what would constitute a “balanced relationship.”

Future U.S.-Argentine bilateral relations should be based on collaboration, consultation, and cooperation. The more Washington is prepared to engage in resolving the region’s problems—on issues of trade, debt restructuring, development finance, integration into the world economy, and the quality of democracy—the more Argentina and Latin American nations will cooperate with the United States in the fight against terrorism. This is the core of a balanced relationship.

For Argentina to rebuild its economy and political institutions, to have strong institutions and a sustainable economic plan, it needs fluid consultations with, and the cooperation and collaboration of, the United States and the international community.

### NOTE

1. Calvo is a distinguished Argentine economist, a former official of the World Bank and the IMF, and a long-time advisor to the Argentina government. He currently teaches at the University of Maryland. [ed.]





## Discussion

**JOSEPH S. TULCHIN:** Despite the obvious differences among the speakers, there is, nevertheless, an interesting convergence: a call to realistic postures in world affairs on the part of Argentina. My personal view is that it is crucial for Argentina to have a sense of its strategic objectives; and all the speakers stated in one way or another that there has been a marked absence of *un proyecto estratégico*. And, to draft a strategic plan, one needs to have a clear, objective understanding of the context in which one wants to act. Beatríz Nofal commented on how little has been done regarding infrastructure linkages among the MERCOSUR countries. One can recall here the arguments of Karl Deutsch about nationalism and about the critical role of linkages both within and among countries. Internal linkages among groups define the cohesion among them, and linkages are important internationally as well. So the absence of infrastructure is crucial.

For example, if MERCOSUR is important, then what are the consequences of having entered into that commitment? Infrastructure is one. Juridical compatibility and mechanisms for dispute resolution are others, which are particularly important in the intermediate term. The question is, if MERCOSUR is a valid option, how can it be sustained through time, irrespective of short-term financial or exchange crises in one of the member countries?

A central issue that affects U.S.-Argentine relations is what Beatríz Nofal referred to as a balanced relationship. In the short and perhaps longer term, relations between the United States and Latin America will be asymmetrical, as they probably will be between Brazil and Argentina. To expect the United States to engage seriously in the search for a “balanced relationship” is unrealistic, and only ends up irritating and even infuriating Latin Americans.

In carrying out a series of interviews for a book on President Menem's foreign policy, I had the pleasure of talking at length to Minister of Foreign Relations Domingo Cavallo, as well as to his vice-minister and three of his assistants. All of them asked, "and what will the United State give us for sending boats to the Persian Gulf?" And my reaction was stupefaction. "I'm sorry," I said. "What do you mean, 'what do you expect in return?'" They expected a *quid pro quo*, a balanced relationship, if you will. But there wasn't anyone in Washington thinking in those terms at the time. Rather, it was a period of absorbing new information about Argentina, as the country attempted to become what then-Foreign Minister Guido Di Tella later called a "reliable partner."

It is time for Argentina to realize that, whatever its national identity and whatever its insertion into the global system, the country requires an independent or autonomous pro-active role. Argentina can no longer define itself in response to the United States, whether in foolishly unrealistic competition or in equally foolish and unrealistic subordination. A strategic relationship with the United States requires a pro-active foreign policy on the part of Argentina, the same that is required of Chile or Brazil or Mexico.

**ARIE KACOWICZ, GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY AND HEBREW UNIVERSITY:**

I would like to ask Juan Gabriel Tokatlián and Beatríz Nofal about what appears to be a slight disagreement between them regarding an assessment of Argentine foreign policy in the last fifteen years. How can Juan Tokatlián's very pessimistic assessment of that period be reconciled with the rather optimistic assessment of Beatríz Nofal regarding democracy, MERCOSUR, and so on?

**BEATRÍZ NOFAL:** We need to have a balanced assessment of what took place in the 1990s. If today the Argentine economy is rebounding—and it is rebounding through import substitution and agricultural exports—it is because of the investments made in the 1990s. The economy would not be able to rebound so rapidly after such a dramatic financial crash, with all of the implications for the testing of democracy, if it were not for these investments. This does not mean that in the '90s there were not domestic vulnerabilities and policy mistakes, including the one I mentioned earlier, of having made fiscal adjustments that deepened the reces-

sion and turned it into a depression. As for the unevenness or roughness of the reform process, it is not that certain reforms were not fully implemented: issues of social equity, the quality of democratic governance, redressing the imbalance in the international system, and formulating development strategy simply were not part of the agenda in the 1990s. We need a balanced view of what took place in the 1990s, the positive aspects as well as the limitations.

In terms of foreign policy, I believe that a balanced relationship is possible even in conditions of asymmetry. This is why there are agreements, contracts, mutual and reciprocal commitments. Without them, countries such as Uruguay and Paraguay would not enter into a MERCOSUR agreement with Brazil, nor would Argentina. The same holds true in foreign policy. An FTAA can either be balanced or unbalanced, even assuming asymmetrical power relationships. It all depends on the sorts of commitments regarding trade, the building of institutions and rules, the legal process, etc. The rule of law is very important in order to balance asymmetrical power relationships.

The best foreign policy does require a good domestic policy, but domestic policy is not enough. In Argentina, there is a serious risk that, because of disillusionment, disappointment, and frustration, we will go back to isolationist principals. This would be dreadful, as Argentina cannot successfully meet the challenges ahead by returning to isolationism.

**JUAN GABRIEL TOKATLIÁN:** I disagree somewhat with Beatriz Nofal's exogenously driven perspective. The international system in general, and the United States in particular, are critical for Argentina. That said, what Argentina needs to emphasize more is domestic politics, an area where it has a minimum of control. For example, it is imperative to reconstruct the state in Argentina; the country requires better qualified, competent, and diligent institutions. Argentina should have a grand strategy in the American and European tradition, which implies a coherent, inter-related, and long-term scheme that incorporates foreign and defense policies. Argentina should have a serious, modern decision-making process in foreign affairs. Complexity and moderation, not oversimplification and overreaction, must guide Buenos Aires' international perspective. We don't need to cast our lot with the United States one day and then bash it the next.

## Discussion

In this context, three elements of the current situation in Argentina are very dangerous. These elements are dramatic political decay, economic collapse, and social resentment on the part of the population. These three elements together remind one of the Middle East; and that is the direction that must be avoided. Over the long term, Argentina must consolidate itself through democratic means, through a pluralistic political process, and through a good, sound, less unequal economy. If we fail to reconstruct domestically the base of our power, we are doomed to failure and to a major negative counter reaction.

**ARIEL ARMONY, WOODROW WILSON CENTER AND COLBY COLLEGE:** Joe Tulchin emphasized the need in Argentina for realistic postures, credible political leadership, and strategic thinking in foreign policy. The problem is that Argentina has not had these three things, which are obviously inter-related, for over a century. It is therefore a mistake to focus just on the 1990s.

I would like to raise two issues having to do with the question of identity. I disagree with Tokatlián, in the sense that Argentine nostalgia has to do with the country of tomorrow, the country that never materializes, the country that will become the great Argentina of the future. At the same time, we have a society that perceives itself to have been “invaded” many times by “foreign forces.” In the 1970s, Argentine society sensed that it had been “invaded” by the Argentine armed forces. In the 1980s or ‘90s, it was as if Argentina had been “invaded” by the Argentine political class. Somehow what happened was perceived to be unconnected to society itself. The question is, what kind of debate is necessary to rethink the role of Argentine society in developing a national project based on a realistic acceptance of the country’s limits and potential? Does the very severe crisis of the present afford an opportunity to re-open the debate over these questions and, more specifically, over the role of civil society in Argentina’s failures?

**JUAN GABRIEL TOKATLIÁN:** We should stop being nostalgic, stop dreaming of an Argentina that no longer exists. By the early twentieth century, Argentina was among the most developed industrializing countries in the world. The patterns of growing, massive European immigration meant that the country was relatively homogeneous ethnically. Argentina had

material power and an idea of itself as a country. Today, the country has neither material power nor an idea of what it is in the world. Argentina is a different country today. New immigrants have come from Bolivia, Peru, Paraguay, and Uruguay. This is positive. All these new realities imply that Argentines need to re-think issues about who we are, what our resources are, where our power base is located, how do we deal with the “other,” and what is it that we want in terms of the vital national interests of the country. It is time—in these cruel times we live in—to stop blaming others for what has been done mostly by us. Unfortunately, these issues are not debated today in Argentina, and without such a debate, we will never develop a serious grand strategy.

**ANA BARÓN, CLARÍN:** Juan Gabriel Tokatlián said that the foreign policy of automatic alliances with the United States has been frustrated and will continue to be so in the future. What do you think about the Argentine government’s position *vis-à-vis* the war in Iraq? It seems that Argentina’s position in early 2003 is different from that under President Menem.

**JUAN GABRIEL TOKATLIÁN:** My sense is that, in the 1990 war against Iraq, Carlos Menem gave Washington a blank check. He decided to involve Argentina militarily in the first Gulf war; he promised a check and he signed it. The difference today is that Argentina has given the Bush administration a check, but without a signature. By early 2003, the Argentine leadership was somehow saying to Washington: “OK, we understand. Go ahead and use force in Iraq. You are planning to do it anyway. After your occupation of Iraq we will send humanitarian aid. But we will do nothing to forge, among the countries of MERCOSUR, a common policy *vis-à-vis* your future invasion. Our position is different from that of Brazil, which opted for more outspoken criticism, closer to that of Russia and France.” By February 2003, President Eduardo Duhalde elevated the tone of his criticism of the use of force: he was clearly more against war than against the United States. By March 2003, his attitude towards the U.S. attack on Iraq was conditioned and permeated by domestic politics and the April presidential election. By April, the whole world, with the exception of the United States, Great Britain, Australia, Spain, and Colombia, had come to criticize (loudly or

mildly) the non-provoked, unilateral invasion of Iraq. Argentina's official position was a tortuous, ambiguous opposition to war. In the end, the next president was going to sign (or not) the check that Duhalde gave to George W. Bush. At one point or another, Washington may try to claim the post-war humanitarian assistance promised by Buenos Aires. If that happens, we may witness whether or not "pragmatic acquiescence" is still alive or whether Argentina is moving towards a reformed foreign policy.

**MARK FALCOFF:** Two Latin American countries—Mexico and Chile—hold seats on the Security Council now. Argentina should be glad that it does not, although when it did, Ambassador Emilio Cárdenas found a way to be very pro-active. The reaction of the Chileans was very interesting. They appear to have been terrified of having to vote on a resolution authorizing the use of force in Iraq. Chilean ambassador to the United Nations Juan Gabriel Valdés stated that he did not like either the U.S. resolution or the French alternative. The Mexicans were also very nervous. A prominent Mexican journalist asked me recently whether, if Mexico voted in favor of the U.S. resolution, there would be a migration agreement between the United States and Mexico. I told him he was wrong, because President Bush was in no position to deliver such an agreement even if he wanted to, given the different opinions about immigration in the Congress. There is no consensus anywhere in Washington for the kind of migration agreement that President Vicente Fox wants. So Mexico might just as well abstain in the U.N. I assumed all along that both Chile and Mexico would abstain, given the historic Latin American approach to war and peace issues.

I am appalled by the questions implying a *quid pro quo*, just as I was appalled by those questions when they arose in connection with the three boats Argentina contributed to the first Gulf war. I watched the televised press conference given by presidents Bush Sr. and Menem when Bush was in Buenos Aires. The last question asked by an Argentine journalist concerned exactly that issue: what are you going to give as for the three boats in the Gulf? In 2003, the Chileans asked me whether Chile's vote in the United Nations on Iraq would affect the signing of the bilateral U.S.-Chile free trade agreement. I told them that I did not think so, because the free trade agreement either is good for Chile and the United States or it is not good for Chile and the United States. And if it's good for both

countries, the United States will sign and ratify the agreement regardless of how Chile votes on the Security Council.<sup>1</sup>

**PATRICIA FAGEN, GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY:** I have a question about migration for Mark Falcoff. He mentioned approximately 200,000 Argentines in the United States. Have migration-immigration issues been discussed by the U.S. and Argentine governments?

**MARK FALCOFF:** They should be discussed, but I do not believe they are an item on the bilateral agenda. The figure of 200,000 represents an estimate of the number of undocumented Argentines in Southern Florida, but I presume that are many more undocumented Argentines in the United States. I often wonder exactly how many Argentines there are in this country, because there is no city of any consequence that doesn't have an Argentine community.

**UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** I want to ask to Mark Falcoff about the turn to the left in Latin America. In addition, there has been much media comment about the lack of a clear policy by the Bush administration toward the Western hemisphere.

**MARK FALCOFF:** I am not worried about the left in Latin America, and I do not believe that the material conditions exist today for Latin America to go through what I call a "populist resurgence." Undoubtedly, I am aware that a strong revival of this kind of a discourse of the left is being assumed even by people who are not of the left, as well as by a kind of *faux* leftist like President Hugo Chávez of Venezuela. But I personally do not believe that the material conditions exist for a revival of old-fashioned left populism.

As for policy concerns, during the first year of the Bush administration, there was no assistant secretary of state for Western hemisphere affairs. That is because one senator on the Foreign Relations Committee did not want to give him a hearing. It is hard to have much of a policy if you don't have a team in place, with an assistant secretary who has been confirmed by the Senate. In addition, the attack on the World Trade Center completely upset the kind of the strategic plans the president had when he came into office, not only with respect to Latin America, but

also with respect to Europe. In fact, our relationships with certain European countries of importance deteriorated very dramatically in early 2003.

The absence of a ratified policy team, and the emergence of an entirely new monstrous agenda in the wake of September 11<sup>th</sup>, have resulted in a great delay in formulating policy toward the hemisphere. The naming and confirmation of Roger Noriega as assistant secretary should help remedy the situation.

**FERNANDO PIMENTEL, EMBASSY OF BRAZIL:** Mark Falcoff mentioned that at some point Argentina would have to choose between the FTAA and MERCOSUR, implying that Brazil and MERCOSUR represented protectionism, a notion I find strange. But will this choice come at all, or anytime soon? And what is the best choice?

**MARK FALCOFF:** The choices have already been presented to Argentina and they have opted for MERCOSUR. I expect that that will continue as long as the United States has no alternative offer to put on the table. Unless the United States substantially changes its own approach toward Argentina, there will not be any alternative offer on the table, and Argentina would certainly remain in MERCOSUR.

At the same time, I can't help remarking, however diplomatically, that the Brazilian decision to devalue without, as far as I know, even consulting Argentina reflected a very U.S.-style approach. I am reminded of the U.S. treatment of Mexico during the Nixon administration several decades ago, when the United States did not bother to tell the Mexicans about what the United States was about to do. If I may say so, Brazil reminds me a lot of the United States *vis-à-vis* the treatment of its neighbors. Brazil is a very big country and culturally has tended to look inwards. It has a great sense of its own goals, and at the same time it does not pay much attention to the impact of what it does on its neighbors. This is very much like the United States, also a large continental power.

**BEATRÍZ NOFAL:** MERCOSUR and FTAA are false dichotomies. MERCOSUR is a ready building block for the FTAA from the point of view of trade. In fact, I think MERCOSUR has been a very important modernizing and liberalizing influence on the countries of the region.



## Argentina- U.S. Bilateral Relations: Future Challenges

The United States has never offered to conclude a free trade agreement with Argentina, but this has to do with political constituencies. Argentina is very competitive in areas that are subject to high levels of protection in the United States. It is very different to offer a free trade agreement to a country like Chile, which does not pose a threat to agricultural interests in the United States, than it is to offer a free trade agreement to Argentina, which does pose a threat in some important sectors.

### NOTE

1. The bilateral trade agreement between the United States and Chile was signed in Miami in June 2003.



PREPARED BY KATHLEEN COSTAR

Research Associate, National Security Archive

The following documents demonstrate the major themes in U.S.-Argentine relations during the period of Argentina's military dictatorship, as seen in the chapters by Carlos Osorio, John Dinges, and Kathryn Sikkink. The first two documents from 1976 illustrate the mixed message on human rights that the military government was receiving from the Department of State and the U.S. Embassy in Buenos Aires, as Ambassador Hill's cautionary words were seemingly undermined by Washington. The next five documents, all from the Carter administration, highlight further the constant tug of war within the Department regarding human rights policy toward Argentina. Assistant Secretary Patricia Derian warned of the dangers of a mixed message in her notes following a trip to Argentina in 1977.<sup>1</sup> Despite this warning, a shift toward rapprochement with the military government can be seen in the late 1977 memos to Secretary of State Cyrus Vance from Assistant Secretary Terence Todman and to the National Security Council from NSC official Robert Pastor. Embassy political officer "Tex" Harris attempted to make his displeasure with the policy shift known through letters sent in early 1979, which note the continuing human rights problems in Argentina. Finally, in a 1979 memo, political officer Townsend B. Friedman comments on the diverse opinions held by some outside of the Department regarding the effectiveness of U.S. human rights policy.

1. Derian's notes were donated to the National Security Archive by Martin Edwin Andersen, who first published excerpts from them in his 1993 book *Dossier Secreto: Argentina's Desaparecidos and the Myth of the Dirty War* (Westview Press). The notes and other documents from the "Martin Edwin Andersen Collection" may be consulted at the Archive's reading room.

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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5777

[REDACTED] BUENOS AIRES 3462

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PFOR, SHUM, AR  
SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR INSTRUCTIONS

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)  
U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS  
Margaret P. Grafeld, Director  
 Release  Excise  Deny  
Exemption(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
Declassify: ( ) In Part ( ) In Full  
( ) Classify as \_\_\_ ( ) Extend as \_\_\_ ( ) Downgrade to \_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_ Declassify on \_\_\_\_\_ Reason: \_\_\_\_\_

1. IN VIEW OF THE GENERAL WORSENING HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION  
HERE, I BELIEVE THE TIME HAS COME FOR A DEMARCHE AT THE HIGHEST  
LEVEL. HENCE, I REQUEST INSTRUCTIONS TO ASK FOR AN URGENT  
APPOINTMENT WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER.

2. I WISH AUTHORIZATION TO SAY TO HIM THE FOLLOWING: QUOTE  
THE US VERY MUCH SYMPATHIZES WITH THE MODERATE POLICIES ANNOUNCED  
BY PRESIDENT VIDELA AND HAD HOPED TO BE HELPFUL TO ARGENTINA  
IN HER PROCESS OF NATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION AND RECONCILIATION.  
WE FULLY UNDERSTAND THAT ARGENTINA IS INVOLVED IN AN ALL-OUT  
STRUGGLE AGAINST SUBVERSION. THERE ARE, HOWEVER, SOME NORMS  
WHICH CAN NEVER BE PUT ASIDE BY GOVERNMENTS DEDICATED TO A  
RULE OF LAW. RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHT IS ONE OF THEM. THE  
CONTINUED ACTIVITIES OF TRIPLE A-TYPE DEATH SQUADS WHICH HAVE  
RECENTLY MURDERED MICHELINI, GUTIERREZ RUIZ AND DOZEN OF  
OTHERS AND HAVE JUST KIDNAPPED A MEMBER OF THE FULBRIGHT  
COMMISSION, MISS ELIDA MESSINA, ARE DAMAGING THE GOA'S GENERALLY  
GOOD IMAGE ABROAD. THESE GROUPS SEEM TO OPERATE WITH IMMUNITY  
AND ARE GENERALLY BELIEVED TO BE CONNECTED WITH THE ARGENTINE  
SECURITY FORCES. WHETHER THEY ARE OR NOT, THEIR CONTINUED OPERA-

Current Class: [REDACTED]

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Current Class: [REDACTED]  
Current Handling: LIMDIS  
Document Number: 1976BUENOS03462

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Channel: n/a

Case Number: 200000044

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TION CAN ONLY BE HARMFUL TO THE GOA ITSELF AND CAUSE CONSTERNATION AMONG ARGENTINA'S FRIENDS ABROAD.  
END QUOTE

3. IN VIEW OF THE PACE OF DEVELOPMENTS, I WOULD APPRECIATE REPLY BY IMMEDIATE CABLE.  
HILL

[REDACTED]  
NNN

Current Class: [REDACTED]

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 N

P 191815Z OCT 76  
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7598

BUENOS AIRES 6871

3986 ARGENTINA PROJECT (S20000044)  
U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS  
Margaret P. Grafeld, Director  
 Release  Excise  Deny  
Exemption(s):  
Declassify ( ) In Part  In Full  
( ) Classify as  Extend as  Downgrade to  
Date  Declassify on  Retain

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**DECAPTIONED**

**BEST COPY AVAILABLE**

F.O. 11652: XGDS-2  
TAGS: PFOR, SHUM, AR, US  
SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER GUZZETTI EUPHORIC OVER VISIT TO UNITED STATES

1. FOMIN GUZZETTI RETURNED TO BUENOS AIRES OCT 14 - AFTER HAVING SPENT SOME TWO WEEKS AT THE WH AND IN WASHINGTON. WHEN I MET HIM AT THE AIRPORT, HE APPEARED TIRED BUT ANXIOUS TO TALK TO ME AFTER I HAD REPORTED TO PRESIDENT VIDELA. SUBSEQUENTLY, HE ASKED ME TO CALL ON HIM AT 6:30 P.M. THE NEXT DAY (OCT 15). I DID SO AND AFTER A WAIT OF ONLY A FEW MOMENTS, HE BOUNDED INTO THE ROOM AND GREETED ME EFFUSIVELY WITH AN ABRAZO, WHICH IS NOT TYPICAL OF HIM. HE TOOK ME TO HIS PRIVATE OFFICE WHERE FOR 35 MINUTES HE ENTHUSIASTICALLY TOLD ME OF THE SUCCESS OF HIS VISIT.

2. HE SPOKE FIRST OF HIS LUNCH IN WASHINGTON WITH DEPUTY SECRETARY ROBINSON, ASST SEC SHLAUDERMAN AND AMBASSADOR MARTIN. HE EMPHASIZED HOW WELL THEY UNDERSTOOD THE ARGENTINE PROBLEM, AND SAID THAT "THE CONSENSUS OF THE MEETING WAS TO GET THE TERRORIST PROBLEM OVER AS SOON AS POSSIBLE." HE SAID HE AGREED FULLY WITH AMB MARTIN'S WARNING TO BE CAREFUL WITH THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND WITH ANTI-SEMITISM, AND THAT HE HAD REPORTED THIS TO PRESIDENT VIDELA.

3. GUZZETTI WAS ALMOST ECSTATIC IN DESCRIBING HIS VISIT WITH VICE PRESIDENT ROCKWELL. ONE COULD CLEARLY SEE THE PRUSSIAN-TYPE, SIMPLE SURNAMINE CONNARDIE BATHOR OVERWHELMED

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TELEGRAM

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BY HIS MEETING WITH THE POWERFUL AND FAMOUS WOCKEFELLER, HE COMPLIMENTED THE VICE PRESIDENT ON HIS SPANISH AND HIS KNOWLEDGE OF ARGENTINA. HE SAID THAT THE VICE PRESIDENT URGED HIM TO ADVISE PRESIDENT VIDELA TO "FINISH THE TERRORIST PROBLEM QUICKLY.... THE US WANTED A STRONG ARGENTINA AND WANTED TO COOPERATE WITH THE GOA."

4. HE CONSIDERED HIS TALK WITH SECRETARY OF STATE KISSINGER A SUCCESS. THE SECRETARY, HE SAID, HAD REITERATED THE ADVICE GIVEN TO HIM AT THE SANTIAGO MEETING, HAD URGED ARGENTINA "TO BE CAREFUL" AND HAD SAID THAT IF THE TERRORIST PROBLEM WAS OVER BY DECEMBER OR JANUARY, HE (THE SECRETARY) BELIEVED SERIOUS PROBLEMS COULD BE AVOIDED IN THE US. GUZZETTI SAID THE SECRETARY HAD ASSURED HIM THAT THE US "WANTS TO HELP ARGENTINA."

5. GUZZETTI SAID THAT HIS TALKS AT THE UN WITH AMB SCRANTON AND SEC GEN WALDHEIM WERE PROTOCOLARY. HE HAD THOUGHT THAT IN HIS TWO CONVERSATIONS WITH WALDHEIM THE LATTER WOULD RAISE THE ISSUE OF HUMAN RIGHTS, BUT, IN THE EVENT, HE HAD NOT DONE SO. GUZZETTI SAID HE HAD BEEN EMBARRASSED AT THE UN BY THE FAILURE OF THE GOA TO INFORM HIM FULLY AND PROMPTLY CONCERNING THE CAMPO DE MAYO BOMBING ATTEMPT AGAINST PRESIDENT VIDELA. THIS, HE SAID, HAD MADE IT VERY DIFFICULT FOR HIM TO ANSWER QUESTIONS BY THE SUBJECT.

6. GUZZETTI SAID HIS RECEPTION AT THE STATE DEPARTMENT, BY THE SECRETARY AT THE UN, AND THE CEREMONIAL DEDICATION OF THE SAN MARTIN MONUMENT HAD GONE FAR BEYOND HIS EXPECTATIONS. HE EXPRESSED APPRECIATION THAT HIGH OFFICIALS IN OUR GOVERNMENT UNDERSTAND THE ARGENTINE PROBLEM AND STAND WITH US DURING THIS DIFFICULT PERIOD. HE SAID HE HAD "SATISFIED" THAT THE STATE DEPT CLEARLY UNDERSTANDS THE PROBLEM AND THAT THERE WOULD BE NO CONFRONTATION BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS OVER HUMAN RIGHTS. HE PURPOASLY HAD NOT BROUGHT UP THE LETTERS FROM CONGRESSMAN BIRNIN AND A SPEECH LETTER FROM THE SENATE CONGRESSMEN, HE SAID, BECAUSE HE HAD FEARED THAT THE STATE DEPT OFFICIALS SO SYMPATHETIC THAT HE HAD BOLD ME TO ASK TO DO SO."

7. THE GOA HAD WANTED, HE SAID, TO NAME ROBERTO GUZET AS AMB

NOT TO BE RECORDED AND WITHOUT THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

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Department of State

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-BUENOS 06871 191949Z

TO REPLACE MUSICH, BUT SEC GEN MALONEIN AT THE UN HAD SAID THAT HE COULD NOT SPARE GUYER UNTIL THE END OF THE YEAR. GUZZETTI REPORTED THAT HE HAD BEEN TOLD AGREEMENT WOULD BE FORTHCOMING PROMPTLY FROM THE USG FOR AMBASSADOR-NOMINEE AJA ESPIL. HE UNDERSTOOD THAT THERE WAS NOT A CHANCE AJA ESPIL COULD PRESENT CREDENTIALS UNTIL AFTER THE US ELECTIONS. HENCE, HE SAID, AMBASSADOR MUSICH WOULD BE ASKED TO STAY IN WASHINGTON UNTIL LATE OCTOBER OR EARLY NOVEMBER.

8. IN APPARENT RECOGNITION THAT AT LEAST FOR THE NEXT FEW MONTHS CIRCUMSTANCES WILL BE DIFFICULT, GUZZETTI NOTED THAT HE HOPED FUTURE LOANS FROM THE IDB MIGHT BE POSTPONED UNTIL STABILITY RETURNS TO ARGENTINA (READ, TO AVOID THE US VOTING NO). CLEARLY, HE HOPES BY JANUARY THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION WILL BE OVER, AND THAT THE LOAN APPLICATIONS WOULD THEN GO FORWARD, ASSURED OF A FAVORABLE US VOIR.

9. COMMENT: GUZZETTI'S REMARKS BOTH TO ME AND TO THE ARGENTINE PRESS SINCE HIS RETURN ARE NOT THOSE OF A MAN WHO HAS BEEN IMPRESSED WITH THE GRAVITY OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEM AS SEEN FROM THE U.S. BOTH PERSONALLY AND IN PRESS ACCOUNTS OF HIS TRIP. GUZZETTI'S REACTION INDICATES LITTLE REASON FOR CONCERN OVER THE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE. GUZZETTI WENT TO US FULLY EXPECTING TO HEAR SOME KIND OF FIRM, DIRECT WARNINGS ON HIS GOVT'S HUMAN RIGHTS PRACTICES. RATHER THAN THAT, HE HAS RETURNED IN A STATE OF JOYFULNESS, CONVINCED THAT THERE IS NO REAL PROBLEM WITH THE USG OVER THIS ISSUE. BASED ON WHAT GUZZETTI IS OBVIOUSLY REPORTING TO THE USG, IT MUST NOW BELIEVE THAT IF IT HAS ANY PROBLEMS WITH THE US OVER HUMAN RIGHTS, THEY ARE CONFINED TO CERTAIN ELEMENTS OF CONGRESS AND WHAT IT REGARDS AS STALLED AND/OR UNINFORMED MIND SEGMENTS OF PUBLIC OPINION. WHILE THIS CONVICTION PAYS, IT WILL BE UNREALISTIC AND UNHELPFUL FOR THE ENERGENCY TO PRESS REPRESENTATIONS TO THE GOV OVER HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS.

HILL

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*(A transcript of Hill's October 1976 cable follows.)*

**PAGE 01**

**BUENOS 06871 191949Z**

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2. HE SPOKE FIRST OF HIS LUNCH IN WASHINGTON WITH DEPUTY SECRETARY ROBINSON. ASST SEC SHLAUDEMAN AND AMBASSADOR MARTIN. HE [EMPHASIZED] HOW WELL THEY UNDERSTOOD THE ARGENTINE PROBLEM. AND SAID THAT “THE CONSENSUS OF THE MEETING WAS TO [unclear] THE TERRORIST PROBLEM OVER AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.” HE SAID [HE] AGREED FULLY WITH AMB MARTIN’S WARNING TO “BE CAREFUL WITH THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND WITH ANTI-SEMITISM. AND THAT HE HAD REPORTED THIS TO PRESIDENT VIDELA.”

3. GUZZETTI WAS ALMOST ECSTATIC IN DESCRIBING HIS VISIT WITH VICE PRESIDENT [ROCKEFELLER]. ONE COULD CLEARLY SENSE THE [PRUSSIAN-TYPE. SIMPLE] SUBMARINE COMMANDER RATHER OVERWHELMED

**PAGE 02**

**BUENOS 06871 191949Z**

BY HIS MEETING WITH THE POWERFUL AND FAMOUS [ROCKEFELLER]. HE COMPLIMENTED THE VICE PRESIDENT ON HIS SPANISH AND HIS KNOWLEDGE OF ARGENTINA. HE SAID THAT THE VICE PRESIDENT URGED HIM TO ADVISE PRESIDENT VIDELA TO “DIMISH THE TERRORIST PROBLEM QUICKLY....THE US WANTED A STRONG ARGENTINA AND WANTED [TO] COOPERATE WITH THE GOA.”

4. HE CONSIDERED HIS TALK WITH SECRETARY OF STATE KISSINGER A SUCCESS. THE SECRETARY, HE SAID, HAD REITERATED THE ADVICE GIVENT TO HIM AT THE SANTIAGO MEETING. HAD URGED ARGENTINA “TO BE CAREFUL” AND HAD SAID THAT IF THE TERRORIST PROBLEM WAS OVER BY DECEMBER OR JANUARY, HE (THE SECRETARY) BELIEVED SERIOUS PROBLEMS COULD BE AVOIDED IN THE US. GUZZETTI SAID THE SECRETARY HAD ASSURED HIM THAT THE US “WANTS TO HELP ARGENTINA.”

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7. THE GOA HAD WANTED, HE SAID, TO NAME ROBERTO [GUYER] AS [AMB]

**PAGE 03**

**BUENOS 06871 191949Z**

TO REPLACE MUSICH, BUT SEC GEN WALDHEIM AT THE UN HAD SAID THAT HE COULD NOT SPARE GUYER UNTIL THE END OF THE YEAR. GUZZETTI REPORTED THAT HE HAD BEEN TOLD AGREEMENT WOULD BE FORTHCOMING PROMPTLY FROM THE USG FOR AMBASSADOR-NOMINEE AJA ESPIL. HE UNDERSTOOD THAT THERE WAS NOT A CHANCE AJA ESPIL COULD PRESENT CREDENTIALS UNTIL AFTER THE US ELECTIONS. HENCE, HE SAID, AMBASSADOR MUSICH WOULD BE ASKED TO STAY IN WASHINGTON UNTIL LATE OCTOBER OR EARLY NOVEMBER.

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HILL

P. Derian

TERRORISM

Terrorism, organized ~~by~~ in cells, is a fact of life. ~~At one time it was~~  
At one time it was more effectively and efficiently organized than  
the government of Argentina. It had more cash than the government;  
revenues came <sup>from</sup> ~~through~~ \$10 to \$60 million ransoms, robberies and  
simple one to one extortion. It is widely believed by Argentines that  
the forces of international communism also provided vast sums of  
moeny, also.

Using the principle universities as bases/<sup>through</sup> ~~and~~ recruitment of upper  
and middle class students, the two ~~primary~~ terrorist organizations  
infiltrated every institution of the society. Their strategy was ~~to~~  
~~through~~ use of geurrilla techniques of  
murder, kidnapping, bombing coupled with the rhetoric of freedom  
and help to the poor and underpaid. "trials" & widely publicized its ex  
ecutions, their media system was very sophisticated.  
The government reacted with the desired and predictable panic, thought  
of it as war and made the first ~~major~~ and crucial wrong decision  
to fight terrorism as a war, <sup>using</sup> ~~using~~ the techniques of the terrorists,  
As soon as that happens, the terrorists are in control./It is a war  
of ideas. Governments <sup>In reality</sup> must not become the terrorists to defeat them.  
It must, in spite of all difficulties, adhere to the rule of law in  
order to win the support of the people . Its short term gains are  
impressive, but in spite of wrecking ~~it~~ the visible operating mechanis.  
it is simply not possible, even whenthe government is free to apprehen  
without notice or any sort of due process any ~~individual~~ person withi  
its borders, to torture, to hold persons detained "forever", to kill,  
it is not possible to find them all and the system of lawlessness is  
established. The government is then left in an nearly impossiible predi

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ament. In the first phase the government gets the tacit support of the people, but there is always an inherent time limit. No society will consent to an ~~un~~ unending state of emergency. ~~When the time comes~~ ~~the government will be forced to~~ Argentina is at this point now; there is very little time for the government to produce normalcy and a sense of being in control.

THE GOVERNMENT

The three man junta has just marked its first anniversary. It has made some important strides in improving the perilous state of the economy, particularly in its ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ international image. It has done so through a variety of means, but/at the expense of low wage employees. They are told to tighten their belts, they have had to adjust to concretely lower standards of living. And they have acquiesced in the light of the emergency. They are restive. Friday the price of gasoline doubled and there was an astounding disappearance ~~XXXXX~~ of traffic in the streets.

The labor unions have been purged of those thought to be terrorists, as/<sup>have</sup>~~XXXX~~ the university student population, the ~~XXX~~ armed services, and all the arms of government- Terrorists publications and public announcements have changed markedly (though bombings and assassination continue.)

Vidella is considered to be a moderate by nearly everyone and/<sup>he</sup>~~XXX~~ is supported by the Army. The Navy and Air Force are thought to be hardly rightists and said to be pushing him very hard. It is widely believed that if they push to/hard, he will simply step aside and be replaced by someone who is a complete tyrant.

Every<sup>person with whom we spoke</sup>~~one~~ ~~XXXXXX~~ said, grudgingly, that there was simply nobody else on the scene/<sup>fit</sup>~~XXXX~~ could run the country. They deplored military government but saw no alternative to it at this time. But uneasiness grows. The number of disappearance continues to increase. The government disclaims all knowledge of the whereabouts of these people. It looks as though they're going after the thinkers, professors, writers, political inclined people who dare, no matter how modestly, to dissent or

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might dissent or are thought to disagree. As the numbers grown, as more and more parents begin to fear for the safety of their adolescent children, as increasing numbers of ordinary citizens are rounded up, detained for 24 to 48 hours and abused while in detention, the magic number approaches and suddenly the government will find itself without support. Then the game is over and Argentina has civil war. The junta is in a race with time. If it can solidify its financial position and begin to restore a feeling of prosperity and if it can gather its courage and institute the rule of law, there is hope. It is time for a bold gesture, it must begin to act like a confident government.

HUMAN RIGHTS

From the highest level the government knows what it is doing and it is deliberately and systematically violating human rights. It believes that it is doing this in the name of human rights. It believes there is no alternative. It is willing to lie and ~~saxx~~ say that it is not policy; it concedes, plaintively, that of course one must expect excesses at lower levels...soldiers and policemen have seen their comrades killed and wounded by terrorists and it is only human that they will not deal gently with savage outlaws.

The government method is to pick people up and take them to military installations. There the detainees are tortured with water, electricity and psychological disintegration methods. Those thought to be salvageable are sent to regular jails and prisons where the psychological process is continued on a more subtle level. Those found to be incorrigible are murdered and dumped on garbage heaps or streetcorners, but more often are given arms with live ammunition, grenades, bombs and put into automobiles and sent out of the compound to be killed on the road in what is then reported publicly to be a shootout or response to an attack on some military installation.

The government has made a few weak gestures toward making things look better. The triple A, described as an organization of outraged citizens reacting on behalf of society to the actions of the terrorists, and itself a terrorist outfit has been disbanded. It is widely believed that these were members of the armed forces and police and not



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ordinary citizens at all. The GOA "Human Rights" director told me that they head had been removed and it no longer functioned. When I as what happened to the head, he replied that it had "disappeared."

No person in Argentina is safe. The government might pluck anyone from day to day life and/<sup>into</sup>an uncertain future . The terrorists might begin a shootout on any street, or bomb any place.

The Catholic Church is torn with dissent among its bishops. The Papal Nuncio verges on despair. The Permant Assembly on Human Rights gathers more and more courage as the situation worsens.

The human rights situation in Argentina is ghastly.

7

THE PRESS

There are many newspapers. They operate under a system of "self censorship." They too, support the government as the only possible way to get the country back to some state of normalcy. But the continuing disappearances chafe. Journalists disappear. Papers are sometimes siezed and penalized with a few days suspension of publication. The B.A. Herald (an English language newspaper) is the boldest supporter of human rights, though not too bold. L' Opinion is consistent in its support of human rights by has paid the price of loss of advertising revenue, suspension of publication, disappearance of its journalists. Its editor and published believes that he and the paper are on the brink of government istigated bad troubles.

WHAT I TOLD THEM

That the commitment of the President was the commitment of the American people and its Congress and the policy of the Government of the United States. That it springs from the President's personal and professional principles and the feelings and wishes of the American people. I acknowledge our own imperfections, speak of the beginnings of the U.S., the UN Declaration of Human Rights., the force of law through international treaties and the mandates of the Congress.

I ~~acknowledged~~ acknowledge the lack of grace in some of our announcements. Explain the feeling of American citizens who work hard for their money pay high taxes and feel as sense of revulsion when it seems that their money is going to governments which violate the rights of human beings. Then how the Congress works, so that they understand how human rights laws come into being. Sometimes talk about pending legislation. Acknowledge the serious nature of their problems, am sympathetic to their problems ~~xxxxxxx~~. Say that we do not want to tell them what to do. Deplore that so little is known about terrorism and that we must quickly learn more. Tell them they're strong enough to institute the rule of law, explain the advantages of uniformed agents of the government arresting people with a paper stating the charges, writing the name in a book at the police station which is open to all, etc, etc. And say that is a possibility. That they have 2 serious problems, one internal and the other with world opinion. Wish that more people would come so that there could indeed be a wider understanding of their problems, promote continued dialouge at all levels. Never concede that they are ~~is~~ not violating human rights. Impress the serious nature of our concern and the fact that it is here to stay. *I spoke of terrorism*

9-

THE U.S MILITARY & OUR INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES

Through these agencies the United States government is sending a dangerous and double message. If this continues, it will subvert our entire human rights policy.

It is widely believed by our military and intelligence services that the human rights policy emanates only from the Department of State, is a political device and one with a short life due to its wide impracticality, ~~and~~ the naivete and ignorance of individuals in the Administration and to the irresponsible headline grabbing of members of Congress.

This is the ~~gripe~~ signal problem ~~of~~ our government has in human rights. The only hope we have to gain support for our ~~initiatives~~ initiatives and to advance the cause of human rights is to make sure that governments understand that we are serious, and committed to our human rights policies.

If they believe and are told by U.S. government officials that we are not serious and committed, they are going to wait us out <sup>try to</sup> AND  
feel betrayed when we press on.

The intelligence services of the Southern Cone have met and have a clear program of helping each other. ~~They~~ Secret police roam the world with great freedom, rounding up the people they want within the buddy system of co-operation with brother professionals. In Latin America the system works with near perfection.

REPRESENTATIVES OF OTHER GOVERNMENTS

After an evening with the Canadian Ambassador and two of his junior staff members, the Ambassador said that all of the Canadian Ambassadors of Latin America would be meeting this week. As a consequence of our talk he ~~waxxxkexxxx~~ had changed his mind about our policy and their policy of private representations only and would carry that message to the meeting where he expected it to have results.

At a dinner party for middle level officers of several countries, ~~the~~ I explained our motives, the seriousness of the policy and the hopes we had for growing co-operation with other nations. The English-officer present called the next day to say that he had completely rewritten his report to London because he now believed that it was human rights for the sake of human rights rather than a gimmick to gain advantage over the Soviets.

11-

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1- That the President as Commander in Chief ~~of the Armed Forces~~ send a message to ~~the~~ all branches of the armed forces stating unequivocally the human rights policy of the U.S. government. which outlines the duty of the military in this regard.
- 2- That the President instruct the C.I.A., the F.B.I. and all other intelligence agencies on the human rights policy of the U.S. government.
- 3- That courses in HUMAN Rights be designed and implemented at once in all service academies, military training institutes purely domestic as well as and intelligence schools, including all ~~with~~ those with international participants.
- 4- That those members of the armed forces and intelligence services who cannot comply with U.S. government policies on human rights be immediately separated from their services.

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12-

RECOMMENDATIONS FRO ARGENTINA

1- The next Ambassador should be fully briefed on the human rights problems of the country and a staunch supporter of U.S. policy regarding human rights. This person must be exceptionally strong and completely versed in the politics and history of Argentina.

2xx

2- We must keep a constant flow of visits between the two countries particularly of administration officials who will incorporate our human rights concerns into all phases of relations.

3-

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7/27/11

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)  
U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, MEMORANDUM

Margaret P. Gensfeld, Director  
(X) Release ( ) Excise ( ) Deny  
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TO: The Secretary  
FROM: ARA - Terence A. Todman  
SUBJECT: A Time to Support Argentina's Videla

We have also just learned that Alfredo Bravo, a prominent human rights leader in Argentina, has been released. It is believed that he was kidnapped by the Navy during Videla's visit to Washington. Videla reportedly told a group of American correspondents that this was humiliating and that heads would roll.

Drafted: ARA/ECA: FER/ondon:jc

AGCUS 9/27/77

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*at 10:30 PS*

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ - GDS

August 9, 1978

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do we do  
to PS hold  
7 re  
interview?  
BB*

MEMORANDUM FOR: ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI  
DAVID AARON  
FROM: ROBERT PASTOR  
SUBJECT: Argentina: Your Questions

You asked for three items on Argentina: (1) current status of the human rights situation in Argentina; (2) whether U.S. policy is in a bind with respect to Argentina and also the Southern Cone, and if so, how we got into it, and whether the NSC was involved; and (3) an alert item for the President. The item for the President is at Tab A. The other questions are answered below.

I. Argentina's Human Rights Situation

*?  
Cuba  
VHFR*

Argentina is still one of the world's most serious human rights problem countries. Just this month, Amnesty International launched a major campaign world-wide aimed at focusing public opinion on Argentina's dismal record, which includes, since March 1976, 15,000 disappearances, 8-10,000 political prisoners, the majority of whom have not yet been charged; over 25 secret prison camps; and numerous documented stories of arrest and torture. (One report from our Embassy is at Tab B.) On human rights-related matters, world opinion always seems to lag behind the reality; Amnesty intends to correct that.

While Argentina still has the worst record in the hemisphere, there has been some improvement in recent months. We understand that the Minister of Interior has instructed the police, and reportedly the military, "to curb excesses; arrests under executive power have decreased and lists of those detained have been published; and a limited right of option for political prisoners to request exile has been reinstated. On a number of cases in which we have expressed special interest -- Jacobo Timerman, Alfredo Bravo, 4 of 5 members of the Deutsch family -- the Argentine Government has released them.

II. U.S. Policy

In recognition of this progress, we have switched from voting "no" on non-basic human needs loans in the IFI's to abstaining.

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*J. J. [Signature]*

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We have also approved the licensing of 16 safety-related munitions items from FMS, and are currently considering another group of requests.

We have informed the Argentine government that if they reach agreement on terms for a visit by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, and there is no deterioration in the human rights situation, we will go ahead with military training to them and will recommend that the Export-Import Bank permit two major credit sales.

The most pressing deadline is October 1, 1978, when the Kennedy-Humphrey amendment prohibiting new arms transfers, and the Roybal amendment, eliminating grant military training to Argentina, come into effect. Both the Argentines and we are eager to take steps which would permit the enormous back-log of credit to be committed before then. (There are over 75 pending FMS cases for \$50 million and \$150 million on the munitions control lists.) There are also funds for military training, which are being held up, and which the President noted (on June 29) that he had a "slight" inclination to find an excuse for approving.

Our current objectives are to urge the GOA: (1) to permit the IAHR to visit in accordance with the IAHR's regulations; (2) to begin releasing large numbers of prisoners (without re-arresting them); (3) to stop the disappearances and explain those which have occurred; and (4) to seek a return to the rule of law.

*of the  
in the*

Everything is stuck now pending Argentina's reaching agreement with the Inter-American Commission or moving on one of the other objectives above. This basic decision, made in accordance with various legislative requirements, was made by State without consulting NSC.

III. Futura U.S. Policy: Who Blinks at the Brink?

Have we gone too far? Have we pushed our policy beyond its effectiveness? Are we pushing the Argentines over the edge and jeopardizing our future relationship? Does the terror justify the repression?

The last question is definitely the easiest. First of all, President Videla told our Ambassador in April 1978 that the war against subversion in Argentina had ended and that he was working to restore the rule of law. Terrorism has not left Argentina, but it is now the exception, not the rule. And Videla, himself, admits that the war is over; we are just encouraging that he secure his own promise. But regardless, a central tenet of our human rights policy is that government-sanctioned repression never solves terrorism. As Vance said in his OAS speech last year, "The surest way to defeat terrorism is to promote justice. . . Justice that is summary undermines the future it seeks to promote. It produces only more violence. . ."

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I, myself, believe that we may have overloaded the circuits and pushed too far, but like our policy to the Soviet Union, there is a logic to it which is difficult to argue. Indeed, it is even more difficult to change direction than with the Soviets because there are laws on the books which mandate that with respect to Argentina we tie our X-M credits, oppose bans in the IFI's, and condition our arms sales. Anything less, or a step backwards from the place we currently find ourself, would be judged as a Presidential retreat just as surely as a different decision on Dresser.

Personally, I am most disturbed about the decision not to finance \$270 million worth of Export-Import Bank credits. I don't believe that this is either a legitimate or an effective instrument, though I do agree with State that the law gave us little choice. The decision did have an unintended positive impact in that it has finally aroused the business community (there are \$600 million worth of credit applications pending in X-M), and they have descended on me, and I have deflected them to Capitol Hill, where they helped defeat more restrictive amendments to the X-M bill last week.

I had sensed that we were approaching the brink when Newson told me he had decided to hold everything up until the Argentines agreed to a visit by the Inter-American Commission. Newson, Bushnell, and our Ambassador Castro all thought Argentina would reach agreement soon, but I had my doubts and still have them. Vaky agrees with me, and we both are looking into ways to step back from the brink without appearing as if it is we who blinked first.

It is not at all clear that the Argentines won't blink first. For one thing, the Europeans made a joint demarche in March, and they seem to be behind us. Secondly, world public opinion is becoming conscious that Argentina is this year's Chile, and the Argentines have become so nervous that they took out a half dozen pages of ads in the Times and have given at least \$1 million to a Madison Avenue P.R. firm to improve its image. Most important, Videla, for the first time in a very long time, is in charge. And he keeps saying he is eager to move forward on his own to restore the rule of law. As he takes those steps, I will make sure that we are quick to respond.

So I will work closely with Pete Vaky to try to develop a strategy to make sure we don't totter over the brink. Since we will have to act before October 1, I am conscious of a quick turn-around, and as soon as we have a strategy, I will get back to you.

#### IV. The Southern Cone: Are We Winning or Losing?

I think Kissinger's observation that if we don't turn our policy around to the Southern Cone soon, we will have them allied against

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Appendix

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us is out-of-date and wrong. For a short time, in early 1977, the Southern Cone countries -- led by Brazil but including Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, and Paraguay -- tried to establish a bloc to confront our human rights policy. Because these governments distrusted each other more than they despised President Carter, the movement did not get off the ground, and indeed they were all over the lot at the O.A.S. General Assembly.

Argentina, Brazil, and Chile are big countries with extremely narrow, ultra-conservative authoritarian governments. The narrowness of their view is reflected in, among other things, the pettiness of their international disputes with one another. Chile and Argentina have almost gone to war over the Beagle Channel, and Brazil and Argentina have strained their relations almost to the breaking point on the issue of water rights.

Our relations with Brazil are now better than they have been at any time since January 1977, and they are as good as can be expected given our non-proliferation policy, and the deliberate chill which Silveira injects into the relationship. We have tried through the working groups and the visits by the President and Vance to develop a cooperative relationship, but that will have to await Brazil's new government next year.

What Kissinger failed to see, after completing his talks with the military leaders in Argentina and Brazil, is that Jimmy Carter has inspired a younger generation of Latin Americans; no other American President in this century has done that. Even Jack Kennedy, who was loved in Latin America, was suspected in the universities because of his strong anti-Communism and the Bay of Pigs intervention. Carter is clearly viewed as a man of great moral stature in Latin America, and that inspires the young and the democratic and embarrasses, and unfortunately, sometimes infuriates some of the conservatives and the military. Carter's stature has translated into real influence unlike anything the U.S. has had since we turned in our gunboats, and at the same time, it has given the U.S. a future in Latin America, which we had almost lost.

The best indication that the U.S. is winning in the Southern Cone, even though governmental antagonism is evident, is that the Argentines are still hungry for a return to normalcy in our relations. They use every opportunity and every channel -- including Kissinger -- to try to get Carter's approval. Thirty, twenty, even ten years ago, the idea that the Argentines would ask the U.S. to bestow upon them the mantle of legitimacy would have been unthinkable, even laughable. Today, it's real.

The Argentines are a proud people, but they are also embarrassed by the human rights situation. They are also more sophisticated

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The Dirty War's Declassified Documents

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ - GDS

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than in the days of Peron when they looked for foreign scape-goats. There are limits to their sophistication, no doubt, and I will take care that we don't cross them, but I think it would be a mistake and an injustice if we turned our policy around at this time.

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EMBASSY OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

2/22/79  
*Argentina*  
**AKØ48** F

February 22, 1979

Dear Chuck and Pat -----

I am in an overload situation with information here, so will hunt and peck out a short note to you all to bring you up to speed on a number of topics. I ask your pardon for my many typos. Here goes ----

Bravo Case

Bravo is running scared of the new chief of the Federal Police General Sassain (sp?) who is a known hardliner and was in charge of security operations in La Plata at the time of Bravo's previous arrest. After much internal and family debate, he has decided to wait it out and hope for the best. He has met with both Freeman and me theselast few weeks for detailed discussions of his problems. In short, he hopes to stay but if the government or any division thereof shakes his tree, he will run.

Vollenweider Job

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2/22/85 F.A. Harris

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New Themes

There are several new themes on the human rights front which I have not been able to get out in messages. I have failed twice, if I fail next week. I will have to go out with a dissent message.

Shift to soft ideological targets -----

*We stressed this in the message for the Secretary*

My analysis of the disappearance data since the World Cup shows a clear shift towards anti-subversive operations against soft Marxist ideological targets. The spectrum of radical mini parties and movements has had their leadership and activists "processed" in the last six months. Included in this group is the Vanguardia Comunista ( see memcon ), PCR, PST, FIP, and the Movement of Christians for Liberation. These organizations have been targeted, the activists abducted, tortured. The top and most able leaders do not return. The second rung folks go under some form of long term detention. And the little fry get turned out. The end result is that each mini party is destroyed by the repressive system.

No Drop in Disappearances in 1978-----

*I think covered this in the message*

The Embassy ran with my analysis of August showing that there was a significant drop between disappearances in the first six months of 1978 and the last six months of 1977. However the data now shows that there is little or no drop in operations reported to the Embassy during 1978. Even with incomplete data for the last half of 1978 due to the lag in reporting. We now have a monthly average of 42 reported disappearances compared with 52 cases for the first six months of the year. The quantitative decline that the Embassy talks about occurred a year ago. The GOA has gotten full credit for that. The new data shows that there has been a leveling off of operations ( against softer targets ) in 1978 at about 50 per month.

Clandestine Prisoners -----

*This is new info -*

We are getting more and more reports of clandestine prisoners. The Acceptance which we all made of the Army's statement that there were no more than 500 prisoners still alive, is not open. Yesterday, I received a report of a facility within the city limits of BA with between 200 and 300 clandestine prisoners. Today, I received a map of another facility in the city. We don't know how many there are, but the new information has shaken my opinion that the number is probably low. ( We have also gotten three reports of rehabilitation farms (granjas) in the last few weeks.) The Commissions visit is flushing out a lot of information. I only wish I had a way of getting it ~~XXXXXX~~ out faster.

Cheers to you both, build a snow man for us

CC The Ambassador

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ARGENTINE PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IFS

Margaret F. Grafeld, Director

( ) Release (X) Exempt ( ) Deny

Exemption(s): B1

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Date 5-9-07 Declassify on Reason 25X1

MEMORANDUM

9/11/99 TBF file serial

AZ III

September 11, 1979

TO : The Files **DECAPTIONED**  
FROM : POL - Townsend B. Friedman  
SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS: A Military View

**UNCLASSIFIED**

P 31

The source of the following report is a fairly senior member of a major Argentine military intelligence organization. His position brings him in contact with both operational units and with high ranking military officials. Thus, he is knowledgeable about the affairs he comments on. However, because of the compartmentalization and rivalries among security forces, his knowledge of particular operations is restricted. He acknowledges that he talks to me only with the authorization of his superiors. He also states that his superiors give him little orientation on what to say--because he says "nobody in command is giving orientation to anybody". He is careful to distinguish between his own opinions and those of the GOA.

Terrorism and Subversion

My source minimized the current real threat against Argentines posed by terrorists. He claims they were eliminated. Their capabilities, he said, were restricted to an occasional clandestine radio broadcast and perhaps "a bomb or two". In any case, he said there was nothing in on objective terms to justify the current seige mentality and activity of the military. He did say that at least one or two of those abducted in August seem to have Montonero connections, promising to let me know at a later date which ones.

The Fundamental Problems

My source said that he had little hope for Argentina getting permanently out of its current mess barring some major changes in what he affirmed were three fundamental, and in effect structural, problems:

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a) the police and security forces are untrained in sophisticated investigative practices and think only brutality gets results;

b) the courts are ineffective, corruptible and mediocre. The security forces--like the general public--have no confidence in the rule of law;

c) the military has a grossly simplistic attitude towards Marxism. Anybody who criticizes the government is a Marxist.

There is little or no capacity to distinguish among criticism, subversion, and terrorism. All are lumped together and thought to be part of "international Marxist subversion which threatens the Argentine nation." My source blamed a part of this exaggerated sensitivity to "international Marxism" on received doctrine from the United States imbibed by the military in years of training at American military facilities.

#### A Coming Turn for the Worse?

My source said he feared that things could get "very bad" again regarding human rights violations. He said there are elements in the military just waiting for the departure of the IAHR to begin another campaign against subversives, terrorists, and critics--i.e. "Marxists" in the military mentality. In part, he attributed these pressures to the narrow view of military men. At least as important, he said, is that some of those most deeply involved in the "dirty war" are terribly frightened that as the climate returns to normality they are being moved closer to the time when they must account for their acts and suffer retribution. On the other hand, if the "dirty war" can be kept going they are protected--and besides, he said, in some cases doing what they like best. My source made it clear that General Suarez Mason is the guardian angel of this group.

#### The US and Human Rights

My source was critical of the US's public diplomacy in favor of human rights. He said our comments only make those involved in the dirty war more afraid that a judgment day is coming for them. Suarez Mason plays upon this--"he is a demagogue among

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the officers." If the USG wanted to do something useful for human rights, he suggested, it would help establish a climate where it would be possible for the GOA to drop a curtain over the past or a curtain that would eliminate the fear that drives the men involved in the dirty war.

Comment: Manipulation may have been behind much of what my source told me. First he established himself as a reasonable man and then he drops the message "we need an amnesty".

I am not inclined to such a cynical view, yet. I think he was accurately giving me his views, based on his perceptions and knowledge.

His view on the effects of USG public diplomacy on the intra-military power struggle closely parallel those I have heard privately from two others. One is a leading human rights activist in Argentina and the other a knowledgeable foreign correspondent who has been observing Argentina for several years and is a critic of the regime. Others in the human rights community are very pleased with our outspokenness.

In effect, my source was talking about the institution of some sort of amnesty for the security forces--a "ley de olvidos." We know that several old-time politicians have discussed the need for a "ley de olvidos" to help open the road for the eventual return to democracy. In addition, [redacted] reported that some military men are speaking about a "ley de olvidos" as a condition precedent for the military's withdrawal from power. We suspect that the security forces who look to Suarez Mason might have grave doubts about the durability of such an amnesty once the military surrenders power.

B1

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## CONTRIBUTORS

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**JOHN DINGES** has taught since 1996 at the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, where he directs the program on radio. From 1985 to 1996, he served as foreign editor, managing editor, and editorial director of National Public Radio. Dinges spent six years in Chile in the 1970s, arriving in the last year of the Allende government and remaining through the coup and for the next five years. As one of the few American journalists in Chile during that time, he reported for *Time*, *The Washington Post*, and ABC Radio. Dinges returned to Washington, D.C. in 1978, and spent the next five years working on the *Washington Post's* foreign desk, a position which included reporting stints in Central America. He is the author of *The Condor Years: How Pinochet and his Allies Brought Terrorism to Three Continents* (The New Press, 2004), as well as co-author (with Saul Landau) of *Assassination on Embassy Row*, among other books. Dinges holds an M.A. in Latin American Studies from Stanford University.

## Participant Biographies

**MARK FALCOFF** is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, where he researches Latin America. He is a former professional staff member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and was a senior consultant to the National Bipartisan Commission on Central America, chaired by Henry Kissinger. He has served on the faculty of the Universities of Illinois, Oregon, and California at Los Angeles, and is a former visiting fellow of the Council on Foreign Relations. His recent articles include “Mexico at an Impasse,” and “Is There Hope for Peace in Venezuela?” Falcoff holds an M.A. and Ph.D. in political science from Princeton University.

**MARÍA JOSÉ GUEMBE**, an Argentine lawyer, directs the project on Memory and the Struggle Against Impunity for Acts of State Terrorism of the Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales (CELS), Argentina’s premier human rights organization. Guembe also coordinated CELS’ annual report on the human rights situation in Argentina, and serves as a professor of communications at the Universidad de Buenos Aires.

**F.A. “TEX” HARRIS** arrived in Argentina in 1977 as the U.S. Embassy’s internal affairs political officer at the height of the “dirty war.” Harris was subsequently awarded the Department of State’s highest honor, the Distinguished Honor Award, for his work in Argentina exposing the fate of the disappeared. Harris recently retired from the Foreign Service after a 35-year career. One of the Foreign Service’s major awards for encouraging responsible dissent was named in his honor. Harris has twice served as president of the American Foreign Service Association—the professional organization of American diplomats—and is currently its secretary. Harris graduated cum laude from Princeton University in 1960. He joined the United States Foreign Service in 1965, after completing a law degree at the University of Texas.

**MARÍA BEATRÍZ NOFAL** is one of Argentina’s leading specialists in international trade and economic integration. As Undersecretary of Industry and Trade in the Ministry of Economy between 1986 and 1988, she had a leading role in the negotiation of the Economic Integration Program between Argentina and Brazil, the first pillar of MERCOSUR. From 1999 to 2002, Nofal served as a member of the Argentine House of

## Participant Biographies

Representatives. She is the founding partner of Eco-Axis, S.A., a consulting firm specializing in international trade issues, and has also served as a consultant for the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank. Nofal received her Ph.D. from The Johns Hopkins University and holds postgraduate diplomas in development planning from the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, University of Paris, and the Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, Netherlands.

**CARLOS OSORIO** is director of the Southern Cone Documentation Project of the National Security Archive, a private research group. Since 2001, Osorio has published 5 briefing books consisting of annotated selections of declassified documents on state terrorism and U.S. policy in Argentina and Uruguay. He produced a CD-ROM containing the State Department's entire Argentina declassification collection, along with annotated selections of documents, which has been shared with judges, lawyers, and human rights groups in Argentina, Uruguay, Europe, and the United States. Osorio served as advisor to the Supreme Court of Paraguay and the Catholic University of Asunción in support of the "Archive of Terror's" Memory, Democracy, and Human Rights Project. Osorio has also provided documentary assistance to truth commissions investigating human rights abuses in Panama and Guatemala. Osorio is a dual Salvadoran-Chilean national and studied engineering at the Universidad de Chile.

**CHRISTIAN FRIEDRICH OSTERMANN** is the director of the Woodrow Wilson Center's Cold War International History Project (CWIHP) and editor of the *CWIHP Bulletin*. Before joining CWIHP in January 1997 as associate director, he worked as a research fellow at the National Security Archive, a non-governmental research institute and repository based at George Washington University. He won the DAAD Article Award of the German Studies Association for "Best Article in German Studies (History), 1994-1996," as well as *Society of Historians of American Foreign Relations'* Stuart L. Bernath Grant as well as the W. Stull Holt Fellowship. Most recently he spent five months as a fellow at the Norwegian Nobel Institute in Oslo. He studied at the University of Bonn, Miami University (Ohio), the University of Cologne as well as the University of Hamburg. He has taught courses on American diplomacy and German history at George Washington University and Georgetown University. Major

## Participant Biographies

Publications include “Keeping the Pot Simmering: ‘The United States and the East German Uprising of 1953’” (recipient of the 1996 DAAD Article Award) and *Uprising in East Germany, 1953: The Cold War, the German Question, and the First Major Upheaval Behind the Iron Curtain*. (Central European University Press, 2001.)

**RENATO CARLOS SERSALE DI CERISANO** served as Director General of Human Rights in the Argentine Ministry of Foreign Affairs from May 2001 to mid-2003. His office dealt with bilateral and multilateral human rights issues, and coordinates policy within the executive branch, with provincial and municipal governments, and with human rights non-governmental organizations. A career foreign service officer, he has held a number of senior diplomatic positions, including Special Representative of the Director-General for United Nations Affairs, United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO); and Special Adviser on United Nations and Inter-Governmental Affairs to the Administrator of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). He also served in 2000 as Under-Secretary of International Economic Affairs for the Province of Buenos Aires. He holds a Masters degree from Columbia University in New York and a Ph.D. from the University of Salvador in Buenos Aires.

**KATHRYN SIKKINK** is the Arleen C. Carlson professor of political science at the University of Minnesota. From 1979 to 1981, she worked at the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA), a human rights advocacy and research organization, as the staff associate responsible for Argentina. With the support of the Century Foundation, she is currently completing a book on U. S. human rights policy and Latin America. Her publications include *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics*, (co-authored with Margaret Keck); *The Power of Human Rights: International Norms and Domestic Change* (co-edited with Thomas Risse and Stephen Ropp); *Ideas and Institutions: Developmentalism in Brazil and Argentina*; and *Restructuring World Politics: Transnational Social Movements, Networks and Norms* (co-edited with Sanjeev Khagram and James Riker). She is a fellow of the Council on Foreign Relations and the American Association for Arts and Sciences, and holds a M.A. and Ph.D. in political science from Columbia University.

## Participant Biographies

**JUAN GABRIEL TOKATLIÁN** is director of the Political Science and International Relations Program at the Universidad de San Andrés in Buenos Aires. He has taught at Boston University and the University of Miami; directed the Centro de Estudios de Internacionales at the Universidad de los Andes, Bogotá; and served on the faculty of the Instituto de Estudios Políticos y Relaciones Internacionales (IEPRI) of the Universidad Nacional de Colombia. He is author or co-author of over a dozen books and dozens of articles on international relations, Colombia, U.S. foreign policy, and drug trafficking in the Americas. Tokatlián has served as an adviser to the Colombian Ministry of Foreign Relations on illicit drug issues and is currently engaged in a three-year research project to promote multilateral solutions to the problem of illegal narcotics. He holds an M.A. and Ph.D. in international relations from The Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies in Washington D.C.

**JOSEPH S. TULCHIN** is the director of the Latin American Program at the Woodrow Wilson Center. Before moving to Washington, Tulchin was professor of history and director of international programs at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He taught at UNC for twenty years, at Yale University before that for seven years, and has also taught at the Naval War College, Newport, RI; the University of Buenos Aires, Argentina; the Ortega y Gasset Foundation, Madrid, Spain; Georgetown University; The Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies; several branches of the Latin American Social Science Faculty (FLACSO), and El Colegio de México in Mexico City. His areas of expertise are U.S. foreign policy, inter-American relations, contemporary Latin America, strategic planning and social science research methodology. Tulchin is the former editor of the *Latin American Research Review*. He has published more than twenty books, including three monographs, on inter-American relations, Latin American affairs, Spanish foreign policy, and international relations, as well as fifty scholarly articles in English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, and German. His book *Argentina and the United States: A Conflicted Relationship* was a best-seller in Argentina for several years. Tulchin holds a Ph.D. in history from Harvard University.

