

CARLOS OSORIO
Remarks At the
DECLASSIFICATION DIPOMACY CEREMONY
National Archives, April 12, 2019

THANK YOU, THANK YOU FOR THAT GENEROUS INTRODUCTION. I WANT TO SAY THAT IT IS SUCH AN HONOR TO ATTEND THIS SPECIAL "DECLASSIFICATION DIPLOMACY" EVENT ON ARGENTINA. AND TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS HISTORIC TURN OVER OF HISTORY.

I AM GRATEFUL TO CHIEF ARCHIVIST DAVID FERRIERO FOR HOSTING THIS UNIQUE GATHERING; AND I WANT TO EXPRESS MY GRATITUDE AND THAT OF MY ORGANIZATION, THE NATIONAL SECURITY ARCHIVE, TO EVERYONE AT THE ARGENTINE EMBASSY, AT THE NSC, AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES, WHO WORKED SO VERY HARD TO ORGANIZE THIS EVENT—ON VERY, VERY SHORT NOTICE.

AND LET ME PERSONALLY EXTEND MY OWN WELCOME TO THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS, GERMAN GARAVANO.

SEÑOR MINISTRO! BIENVENDIDO A WASHINGTON. QUE BUENO QUE USTED Y ARGENTINA YA TIENEN LOS DOCUMENTOS DESCLASIFICADOS!

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OVER AT MY ORGANIZATION, THE NATIONAL SECURITY ARCHIVE, MY COLLEAGUES AND I HAVE HAD THE DISTINCT EXPERIENCE OF WORKING ON A NUMBER OF MAJOR SPECIAL US GOVERNMENT DECLASSIFICATIONS. PROJECTS ON EL SALVADOR, GUATEMALA, PERU, CHILE, BRAZIL...

-- AND EVEN A PREVIOUS RELEASE OF STATE DEPARTMENT RECORDS ON ARGENTINA, AUTHORIZED BY PRESIDENT CLINTON'S SECRETARY OF STATE, MADELAINE ALBRIGHT, AND COMPLETED BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF GEORGE W. BUSH IN 2001.

--WITH ALL THAT PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE, WE HAVE NEVER WITNESSED THE INTENSITY AND COMMITMENT BY THE PROFESSIONALS IN THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCEL AND THE AGENCIES THEMSELVES TO FINDING ALL THE DOCUMENTS AND DECLASSIFYING THEM AS FULLY AS POSSIBLE.

--DOCUMENTS THAT ONCE LOOKED LIKE THIS [[HOLD UP ENLARGED VERSION OF FBI DOC ON CUBANS](#)] NOW LOOK LIKE THIS [[HOLD UP COMPLETELY UNREDACTED VERSION](#)].

--I WANT TO COMMEND THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION FOR SUPPORTING THIS PROJECT TO COMPLETION. I WANT TO COMMEND EVERYONE AT THE NSC AND THE AGENCIES THAT FOUND AND REVIEWED THESE RECORDS FOR THEIR EXCELLENT WORK IN EXTRICATING THOUSANDS OF THESE RECORDS FROM THEIR SCIFS— THOSE “SENSITIVE COMPARTMENTED INFORMATION FACILITIES” WHERE THESE DOCUMENTS LAY DORMANT FOR, IN SOME CASES, MORE THAN 40 YEARS.

--IN MY MIND, YOU ARE ALL ‘LIBERATORS OF HISTORY.’ YOU HAVE FULLFILLED PRESIDENT OBAMA’S ORIGINAL PLEDGE WHEN HE AUTHORIZED THIS DECLASSIFICATION PROJECT THAT “WE HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO CONFRONT THE PAST WITH HONESTY AND TRANSPARENCY.”

--YOU HAVE MET WHAT ARGENTINE NOBEL LAUREATE PEREZ ESQUIVEL CALLED “THE DEBT OF HISTORY” THE U.S. HAS IN ARGENTINA.

--AND LET ME SAY TO JOHN POWERS WHO DESERVES SPECIAL CREDIT FOR LEADING THE DECLASSIFICATION PROJECT: YOU, SIR, ARE THE BOLIVAR OF THIS MOVEMENT.

--AND I WANT TO THANK YOU FOR YOUR EFFORTS TO INCLUDE NOT ONLY MYSELF IN THIS UNFORGETABLE PROJECT, BUT ALSO YOUR OUTREACH TO THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMUNITY IN ARGENTINA.

THE EXTRA EFFORTS YOU HAVE MADE TO MAINTAIN COMMUNICATIONS WITH HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS SUCH AS THE ABUELAS OF THE PLAZA DE MAYO IS QUITE COMMENDABLE. TO THE HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS OF ARGENTINA, WE OWE A SPECIAL DEBT OF GRATITUDE; DESPITE THE PASSAGE OF DECADES, THEY HAVE KEPT THE MEMORIES OF THE VICTIMS OF SO MANY ATROCITIES ALIVE AND

MAINTAINED THE MORAL AND POLITICAL PRESSURE ON THEIR OWN GOVERNMENT AND ON ALL OF US TO FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENED TO THEIR LOVED ONES, AND HOLD THOSE RESPONSIBLE ACCOUNTABLE.

FINALLY, I WOULD BE REMISS IF I DID NOT RECOGNIZE THE EFFORTS OF THOSE DIPLOMATS, POLICY MAKERS AND NATIONAL SECURITY AGENTS ON THE GROUND WHO GENERATED **THE PAPER TRAIL OF HISTORY** THAT IS BEING DECLASSIFIED TODAY. I WANT TO RECOGNIZE THE WORK OF DIPLOMATS SUCH AS AMBASSADOR ROBERT HILL WHO FIRST CONFRONTED THE GENERALS AND EVEN HIS SUPERIORS AT THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE. I WANT TO RECOGNIZE THE INTREPID POLITICAL OFFICER TEX HARRIS, WHOSE EMBASSY CABLES REPEATEDLY CALLED ATTENTION TO THE HUMAN RIGHTS ATROCITIES THAT WERE BEING COMMITTED AROUND HIM.

MR. HARRIS IS HERE TODAY. LET ME SHARE WITH YOU OUR GRATITUDE FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE FIRST INTERNAL DEBATE OVER STANDING UP FOR THE PRINCIPLES OF HUMAN RIGHTS, AND HUMAN DECENCY IN U.S. FOREIGN POLICY.

--YOU AND YOUR COLLEAGUES AS WELL AS FIGHTER LEADERS SUCH AS PATRICIA DERIAN AND MARK SCHNEIDER AND SO MANY OTHERS [I CAN SEE AMONG THOSE PRESENT ROBERTA COHEN WHO] HELPED TO CREATE THE HISTORICAL RECORD ON THE ISSUE OF HUMAN RIGHTS.

--IT IS A HISTORICAL RECORD THAT HOLDS MANY LESSONS FOR TODAY, AND REMAINS **HIGHLY RELEVANT** AS THE DEBATE OVER U.S. FOREIGN POLICY AND HUMAN RIGHTS IS REVISITED.

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NOW, I HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO REVIEW SOME OF THESE EXTRAORDINARY DOCUMENTS AND I WANTED TO SHARE WITH YOU MY PRELIMINARY EVALUATION OF THEIR IMPORTANCE:

--THEY ARE RICH IN DETAIL

--THEY ARE RIVETING IN THEIR CONTENT, AS GRIM AND SINISTER AND HORRIFIC AS THAT CONTENT OFTEN IS IN THESE RECORDS OF REPRESSION.

--I AM CERTAIN THAT THIS PROJECT REPRESENTS A NEW MODEL OF DECLASSIFICATION DIPLOMACY. I AM CERTAIN THAT THE RELEASE OF THESE RECORDS IS A UNIQUELY VALUABLE CONTRIBUTION TO THE CAUSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS, THE CAUSE OF JUSTICE, AND THE CAUSE OF OUR FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT-TO-KNOW.

--THAT IS BECAUSE...**THESE DOCUMENTS NAME NAMES**

---THEY NAME THE NAMES OF THE PERPETRATORS AND THE NAMES OF THEIR VICTIMS.

AND THEY IDENTIFY THE GRUESOME AND REPREHENSIBLE HUMAN RIGHTS CRIMES THAT WERE COMMITTED.

AND... BECAUSE THEY NAME THOSE NAMES, THEY PROVIDE A LEVEL OF TRUTH AND ACCOUNTABILITY THAT MANY OTHER DECLASSIFICATION PROJECTS HAVE FAILED ACHIEVE.

THEY WILL PROVE EXTREMELY VALUABLE IN ARGENTINA'S ONGOING QUEST FOR JUSTICE, TRUTH AND DIGNITY FOR THE TENS OF THOUSANDS OF HUMAN RIGHTS VICTIMS AND THEIR FAMILIES.

--IN A NUMBER OF CASES, THESE DOCUMENTS WILL PROVIDE THOSE FAMILIES WITH THE ONLY EVIDENCE THEY HAVE EVER HAD ON THE FATE OF THEIR LOVED ONES. LIKE THE TENS OF THOUSANDS OF DESAPARECIDOS FROM THE ERA OF THE MILITARY DICTATORSHIP, THE ARGENTINE ARCHIVES ON REPRESSION HAVE ALSO BEEN DESAPARECIDOS—BURIED, BURNED, PERHAPS ALSO THROWN INTO THE OCEAN. IN SO MANY CASES, THE U.S. DOCUMENTS BEING TURNED OVER TODAY TO ARGENTINA ARE, AND WILL BE, THE ONLY GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE OF THE FATE OF SO MANY ARGENTINIANS AT THE HANDS OF THE MILITARY DICTATORSHIP.

--I HAVE PERSONALLY EXPERIENCED THE INTENSE WARMTH OF THE RELATIVES OF THE DISAPPEARED WHEN I SHARED PREVIOUSLY DECLASSIFIED DOCUMENTS AS PART OF TRIAL TESTIMONY IN ARGENTINA. I HAVE HEARD AND SEEN THE GRATITUDE FROM THE CHILDREN OF THE DISAPPEARED WHO HAVE HELD

DOCUMENTS IN THEIR HANDS—DOCUMENTS THAT FINALLY SHED LIGHT ON WHAT HAPPENED TO THEIR PARENTS.

“THANK YOU,” THEY TELL ME. “THE DOCUMENTS ALLOW US TO TOUCH OUR LOVED ONES.”

TO ALL THE FIGHTERS FOR THE RIGHT-TO-KNOW HERE...AND IN ARGENTINA... I EXTEND THAT SENTIMENT TO YOU.

THAT, MY FRIENDS, IS THE DIPLOMACY OF DECLASSIFICATION.

THAT IS THE ULTIMATE MEANING OF DECLASSIFICATION DIPLOMACY IN THE NAME OF HUMAN RIGHTS.

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