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OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT  
WASHINGTON

September 5, 1978

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION, AMBASSADOR GARDNER'S RESIDENCE

September 4, 1978, 10:00 a.m.

ARGENTINE SIDE

President Videla  
Col. Miguel A. Mallea Gil  
Dr. Ricardo Yofre

U.S. SIDE

Vice President Walter F. Mondale  
A. Denis Clift  
Interpreter:

VP: I am pleased to have this meeting. I remember the meeting we had in the White House at the time of the Panama Canal Treaty ceremony. We want good relations and, speaking candidly, there are strains now. I hope today we can make some progress. I told the President of your request. He said by all means I should meet with you and he asked me to extend best wishes. He said we don't want trouble with Argentina, but human rights are a central concern. I will report to the President personally on your views.

V: Thank you, Mr. Vice President, for inviting me. For me it is an extremely important opportunity to discuss these matters because I feel our relations are deteriorating. I fully concur with President Carter's position on human rights. We have profound belief in the democratic process so that men can live with dignity and freedom. We are with the United States and we are not troubled by criticism when it is objective. However, we are concerned by attitudes projecting intervention in domestic affairs. I spoke with President Carter about this at the time of the Panama Canal Treaty signing, but since that time we have had to delay our announcement of an invitation to the Interamerican Commission on Human Rights because of U.S. criticisms projecting intervention.

A second problem--Argentine politicians were invited to visit the United States, but they, too, did not visit because

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Memorandum of Conversation  
Ambassador Gardner's Residence

page 2  
September 4, 1978

- V: (continued)  
of the U.S. statements intervening in our affairs. Mrs. Darien's statements are contributing to a deterioration in our relations.
- VP: Were her statements made in Argentina or in Washington.
- V: In Washington before Congress. Mr. Vice President, the western world must be united, and the United States must lead the western world. At the same time, the people of Argentina cannot tolerate intervention. This is our concern.
- VP: I fully understand. We don't want to get into such a situation. We want to work with you to have good relations. As you know, the Humphrey-Kennedy Amendment is coming into effect. We must soon take decisions on the Allis-Chalmers deal. We want to be helpful. It would be important if you could have the Interamerican Human Rights Commission received in Argentina on terms acceptable to the commission. We would not link your actions with our own, but if you do something, then we could do something.

As you know, the U.S. press covers developments in Argentina closely. There are certain human rights cases with the people known to our press--people such as Jacobo Timerman. To the extent that you make progress on these cases, it will help us to make progress. We know that you have had problems in your country, and we want to work with you to establish a firm basis for progress.

- V: I understand, and government-to-government relations are not easy. My concern is when a problem between us is raised to the level of a public or popular issue. This leads to situations where our citizens adopt partisan positions against the United States, to situations where our businessmen adopt partisan positions because they cannot conclude deals when Ex-Im does not grant a loan.
- VP: I understand. If we could get this turned around then we could move ahead, for example, on Allis-Chalmers. I would also like to suggest that it would be good if Assistant Secretary Vaky could come to Argentina to meet with you or with a person of your choice for a review of our relations.
- V: Would this be after the Interamerican Commission or before.

Memorandum of Conversation  
Ambassador Gardner's Residence

page 2  
September 4, 1978

- VP: Oh, I think it should be as soon as possible.
- V: Perhaps we could arrange a visit by the commission by mid-October.
- VP: But could you announce the visit earlier.
- V: Perhaps. I would like to point out that since our meeting at the Panama Canal signing, there have been a series of events showing the efforts on the part of our government:
- we have issued a list and names of all the detained;
  - we have published a list of all of those who disappeared and then reappeared;
  - last Christmas we released approximately 500;
  - this last week, 65 individuals were freed;
  - I have indicated that we are prepared to give a favorable response to the Commission on Human Rights;
  - Timerman's situation has changed; he is now out of jail and under house arrest;
  - Professor Bravo is now under house arrest and we expect the court to lessen the charges against him.

Officials of the U.S. government are welcome in Argentina, but they cannot give the impression that they are coming to inspect us.

- VP: No, they would come exercising discretion. It will be important to have the announcement on a visit by the Human Rights Commission on the terms acceptable to the commission.
- V: We could have done so last month, but Mrs. Darien's statement before the Congress forced us to suspend our announcement. In the course of a few days, I believe we could develop a satisfactory announcement.

Memorandum of Conversation  
Ambassador Gardner's Residence

page 4  
September 4, 1978

- C: In considering the announcement, it is important to remember the tight timing in the United States. The Ex-Im Bank must take its decision by September 15. The Humphrey-Kennedy Amendment comes into effect on October 1.
- VP: We would hope the announcement could be taken care of before then.
- V: This was our intention. I don't think it can be done, however, before September 15.
- VP: We are encouraged that you will receive the commission. Will you authorize me to tell the President that this will be done.
- V: Yes.
- VP: When may Assistant Secretary Vaky come.
- V: After our announcement on the commission. \*\*  
For Vaky we would prefer no other stops.
- VP: You would like him to visit Argentina alone.
- V: Ideally, yes.
- VP: I won't give you a yes on this, but I will recommend it and I will get back to you.
- V: Will you let us know ahead of time what his mission will be to permit us to prepare for it.
- VP: I will report to the President on my return and we will contact your ambassador immediately.
- V: Mr. Vice President, U.S.-Argentine relations proceed in multiple channels--economic, political, cultural. Now our relations are focused solely on human rights. We can understand this problem if it is addressed in the broader spectrum of our overall relations and is not the single focus.

Memorandum of Conversation  
Ambassador Gardner's Residence

page 5  
September 4, 1978

VP: We have no desire to interfere in the affairs of your country. We have enough domestic problems of our own. If we can get on the road to progress in human rights, this whole other vista will open. We want the best possible relations. The President was taken by you during the meeting he had last year. He is disappointed in the current course of our relations. He wants our relations to head in the right direction. I think we are now at a point where we can turn the right way.

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



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