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ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE  
WASHINGTON

12/3/82 December 3, 1982

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

Participants: Argentine Ambassador Lucio Alberto Garcia del Solar  
Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs Elliott Abrams  
Date and Time: December 3, 1982, 1:00 p.m.  
Place: The Jockey Club, Ritz-Carleton Hotel, Washington, D.C.

There were two main topics, certification and the question of the disappeared. As to certification, the Ambassador asked where things stood. He said he thought Argentina on the facts deserved certification. When I mentioned setbacks such as the recent Calvi statement on "the mothers of terrorists" or some closing of magazines, he acknowledged them. But the Ambassador noted that there were always going to be some of the minor incidents while the army was in power. The overall trend, however, was enormously positive. He certainly hoped Argentina would not be denied certification simply because of Chile. Certification would help both countries. He pointed out in particular that while older Argentine military men have close ties to America and are willing to put the Falklands War behind them, this was not true of the younger military. They have fewer ties to the U.S. and reacted with much greater hostility to our support for the U.K. It is important to draw them into relations with the U.S. military, he said.

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

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I asked the Ambassador how the question of the disappeared would affect future political developments. How, ultimately, would a compromise be reached between the military and the parties? He replied that there was no clear answer. However, he was somewhat optimistic for in private discussions the political leaders were much more sensible and realistic than they were in public speeches. So perhaps a compromise could be reached which would satisfy everyone. On this issue, the military is absolutely united and determined to avoid widespread and vengeful punishment for its acts. One element of a compromise would be for the government to tell everything it could about the fate of individuals, even if there were no investigation into how they had reached that fate.

I raised with the Ambassador the question of children in this context, such as children born to prisoners or children taken from their families during the dirty war. While the disappeared were dead, these children were alive and this was in a sense the gravest humanitarian problem. The Ambassador agreed completely and had already made this point to his foreign minister and president. They had not rejected his view but had pointed out the problem of, for example, taking children from adoptive parents. I suggested that that problem might be handed over to the Church or to a commission which included the Church, doctors, etc. Action with respect to these children would have enormous humanitarian and political content. Again the Ambassador said he was in complete agreement and would raise this point once more with his capital.

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I told the Ambassador that what we needed for certification was a period of quiet and steady human rights progress. He agreed, and said that he was sure the authorities would react with restraint when there are, for example, political marches and demonstrations. There would no doubt be setbacks, and unfortunate incidents, but the trend toward more and more free expression and toward free elections was unstoppable and would continue.

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