

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
TELEGRAM

6/2/77 1820 *Chaplin*

INDICATE
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FROM
 AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

CLASSIFICATION

UNCLASSIFIED

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 TAGS:
 SUBJECT:
 ACTION:

GDS
 PFOR SHUM AR
 GOA Official Proposes US-Argentine Dialogue on Human Rights

SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE

[REDACTED] BUENOS AIRES 4083

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1. At luncheon June 1 Minister Juan Carlos Arlia, who is now Foreign Ministry's deputy coordinator of foreign policy as well as director of the human rights working group, surprised us by asserting that ~~Argentine~~ Argentine Government agrees with what Carter administration is attempting to ~~accomplish~~ accomplish in the human rights area. Taking as point of departure his conversations with human rights coordinator Patricia Derian in March, Arlia said that GOA understood EX USG was interested in promoting human rights observance and solution to Argentina's terrorism and security problems in a cooperative and positive manner, rather than continuing the negative sanctions route. Arlia said that GOA was greatly disappointed when Assistant Secretary Todman had to cancel his visit inasmuch as X Argentines were looking forward to initiating a "very important dialogue" on this subject.

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CLEARANCES:

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 U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS
 Margaret P. Grafeld, Director
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Declassify: In Part In Full
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2. Erhoffs pointed out that time for dialogue was rapidly slipping away as legislation was being considered in US Congress which could impose further rigid constraints on US policy. Moreover, there were decisions that USG had to make with xx regard to loan proposals shortly coming before international lending institutions and we were unable to provide any information which could show significant improvement in the human rights situation in Argentina. We asked where and when Argentines would be prepared to initiate such a dialogue.

3. Arlia responded that bilateral discussions could begin at Grenada and continue thereafter.

- ✓ the ~~DATE~~ OAS meeting in ~~Grenada~~/ Foreign Minister Montes, Grenada
- ✓ Undersecretary Allara and Arlia will attend ~~Grenada~~/meeting and, said Arlia, they look forward to ~~having important~~ initiating important ~~discussions~~ discussions with Secretary Vance, Assistant Secretary Todman and other US officials on this ~~subject~~ occasion.

~~Further~~

- ✓ 4. Arlia stated ~~further~~ further that Argentines wished to have a full and complete discussion with us which would get "to/bottom" of the issues involved. It was not clear from this discussion as to what the Argentines wished to say on this subject that we have not heard before. Indeed, Arlia's comments were mixed with familiar statements that Argentina needed more time to sort itself out and that the anti-insurgency effort will continue regardless of actions which US may take. ~~President~~

~~Video tape recording of the meeting and a moderate opposition to the determination~~

~~of the troops to fight anti-subversion in their own way regardless~~
~~less of outside disapproval~~ Only thing new he mentioned--new
 for him to admit, that is--was that there were ~~excesses of~~
~~positions~~ subversion
~~positions~~ within armed forces over counter-~~terrorist~~/policy
 ranging from President Videla's personal concern and moderate
 position to the determination "of the troops" to fight ~~against~~
 subversion in their own way ~~regard~~ regardless of outside
 disapproval. Arlia also mentioned Videla's frankness at
 Caracas press conference in implicitly recognizing that problem
 of disappearance cases at least in part is due to excesses
 on the part of Argentine security forces. Arlia seemed to be
 suggesting that US could play a constructive role rather than
 an exacerbating one without defining what that role should
 be.

5. We note from today's press that Economy Minister Martinez
 de Hoz is reported to have made similar statement to Treasury
 Secretary Blumenthal to the effect that Argentina agrees with
 US human rights policy. At this writing we do not know how
 deep this new posture goes and what ~~it~~ it really means.

6. The one positive development we can point to on the human
 rights front is the reports we are receiving with respect to
 a new policy for treating terrorists who give themselves up
 and who do not have blood on their hands [b1

7. Embassy urges that Dept accept ~~Argen~~ Argentine request

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for bilateral discussions at OASGA meeting. Should
Dept agree to bilaterals, we will go ^{to Fonoff} ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ four
and press for further details on points which
Argentines are prepared to discuss in these talks,
and what results might flow from them.

8. Argentine proposal for dialogue could be stillborn
if USG forced to vote against loans to GOA scheduled
for consideration in IFIs in next two weeks. While
we are not optimistic that significant results can
be achieved from dialogue, or even that GOA has clear
idea of what it is proposing, we do strongly urge that every
opportunity to influence situation here be fully explored
before USG resorts to ~~XXXXX~~ ultimate sanction of negative
vote in IFI. This ^{could} ~~XXXX~~ be opportunity to demonstrate
that ^{persuasion} ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ with the threat of sanction is far more
effective than imposition of sanction itself. If
dialogue proves unproductive, time lost would not be
too high a price to pay.

9. Department's comments requested soonest.

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OPTIONAL FO