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TO : The Secretary
FROM: ARA - William D. Rogers

Argentine Armed Forces Take Over Government

The much publicized, long-awaited Argentine military coup took place early this morning. In a step-by-step implementation of a carefully prepared plan, the armed forces ousted the 21-month-old government of Mrs. Maria Estela Peron and installed a three-man junta composed of the armed forces commanders headed by Army General Jorge Rafael Videla. Mrs. Peron has been placed under arrest, and there are reports that the military government will conduct a full investigation of charges that the former President diverted public funds to her own use. Certain other political and labor leaders have also been arrested. Thus far, there are no confirmed reports that any violence has occurred.

We have received a message from the new Argentine Government, in the form of a letter from the Argentine Military Attache to the Department of the Army. The language contained in the letter is similar to that employed in notes requesting recognition. We do not believe that any action should be taken on the communication until the situation has clarified further in Argentina, and other governments have accorded recognition.

There have been no incidents reported involving American citizens and there does not appear to be any immediate danger to U.S. citizens or interests in Argentina. Nevertheless, it is probable that we may have serious problems with the new government as a result of its policies concerning censorship and human rights.

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Ambassador Robert Hill, who has been on leave in New Hampshire the past few days, is returning to Washington and will be in the Department this afternoon.

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