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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
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P 272012Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6283

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP
SUBJECT: HENRY KISSINGER VISIT TO ARGENTINA

SUMMARY: FROM ARRIVAL TO DEPARTURE HENRY KISSINGER AND HIS FAMILY WERE WELL RECEIVED BY ARGENTINE POPULACE. THE GOA LAID OUT RED CARPET, PULLING OUT STOPS. DR. KISSINGER SPOKE TO DIVERSIFIED GROUPS--FROM BANKERS TO GAUCHOS. IN MOST INSTANCES, HE COMPLIMENTED GOA FOR DEFEATING TERRORISTS BUT HE WARNED THAT TACTICS USED AGAINST THEM THEN ARE NOT JUSTIFIABLE NOW. GENERALLY, DR. KISSINGER PUBLICLY AFFIRMED HIS SUPPORT FOR PRESIDENT CARTER'S FOREIGN POLICY WITH A FEW EXCEPTIONS.

1. DR. KISSINGER, HIS WIFE AND SON ARRIVED IN BA EARLY WEDNESDAY MORNING (JUNE 21). HE WAS MET AT THE AIRPORT BY A FONOFF REP WHO DOGGED HIM THROUGHOUT HIS VISIT. KISSINGER WAS THE GUEST OF PRESIDENT VIDELA, SUPPOSEDLY INVITED TO VIEW WORLD CUP. THE FORMER SECRETARY MADE IT CLEAR DURING HIS FIVE-DAY STAY HE WAS IN ARGENTINA AS PRIVATE CITIZEN AND NOT A SPOKESMAN FOR USG.

2. KISSINGER'S FIRST ACTIVITY WAS TO LUNCH WITH PRESIDENT VIDELA, COL. MALLEA GIL (INTERPRETER) AND AMBASSADOR CASTRO AT LOS OLIVOS, OFFICIAL PRESIDENTIAL RESIDENCE. VIDELA

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PREARRANGED IT SO KISSINGER AND THE INTERPRETER WOULD MEET WITH HIM PRIVATELY HALF HOUR BEFORE AMBASSADOR'S ARRIVAL. IMMEDIATELY ON AMBASSADOR'S ARRIVAL AT 1300 LUNCH WAS SERVED.

3. KISSINGER INFORMED AMBASSADOR THAT DURING PRIVATE SESSION WITH PRESIDENT HUMAN RIGHTS WERE DISCUSSED. ALLEGEDLY VIDELA WANTED SUGGESTIONS FROM DR. KISSINGER AS TO HOW TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH USG. THE AMBASSADOR WAS NOT INFORMED WHETHER KISSINGER OFFERED ANY SOLUTIONS.

4. AT LUNCH, VIDELA ASKED KISSINGER FOR HIS VIEWS ON LATIN AMERICA. FORMER SECRETARY RESPONDED THAT NOW MORE THAN EVER WAS TIME TO BE CONCERNED ABOUT DEFENSE CAPABILITIES OF WESTERN HEMISPHERE. HE ADDED UNITY OF ACTION AMONG THE LA COUNTRIES IS REQUIRED IF ALL AMERICAN COUNTRIES ARE TO SURVIVE. HE STRESSED THAT DURING HIS TENURE AS SECRETARY OF STATE, LATIN

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AMERICA WAS NOT HIS TOP PRIORITY. HE SAID THIS WAS TRUE BEFORE HE WAS SECRETARY AND IT IS TRUE NOW. KISSINGER POINTED OUT THAT THIS WAS NOT MEANT TO BE A REFLECTION ON ANY ADMINISTRATION. THE LACK OF ATTENTION TOWARDS LA WAS NOT A DELIBERATE ACT ON ANYBODY'S PART. IT WAS JUST A FACT THAT WITH THE REST OF THE WORLD EXPLODING, NEGLECT ENSUED.

5. KISSINGER EMPHASIZED LATIN AMERICAN MAY BE NEXT ON RUSSIA AND CUBA'S SCHEDULE. HE ADDED IN VIEW OF EVENTS IN AFRICA IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT THE USG FOCUS ON LATIN AMERICA. HE APPLAUDED PRESIDENT CARTER FOR HIS ANNAPOLIS SPEECH. KISSINGER STRESSED HIS SUPPORT OF MOST OF CARTER'S FOREIGN POLICY, ESPECIALLY THE PANAMA CANAL TREATY AND SALES OF AIRCRAFT TO MID-EASTERN COUNTRIES. KISSINGER SAID IT WAS ABOMINABLE THAT A MYTH PREVAILED THAT CUBAN SOLDIERS WERE INVINCIBLE. SINCE WHEN, HE ASKED, CAN CUBAN SOLDIERS MARCH FROM SOUTH TO NORTH IN AFRICA AND EXPECT THE WORLD TO APPLAUD

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THEM. THE FORMER SECRETARY TOLD VIDELA HE GAVE HIS FULL SUPPORT TO PRESIDENT CARTER ON HIS AFRICAN POLICY.

6. HUMAN RIGHTS WERE DISCUSSED BRIEFLY. KISSINGER SAID IT WAS UNFORTUNATE MANY AMERICANS STILL THOUGHT ARGENTINA WAS A SOFT DRINK. HE SAID THIS INDICATED THAT AMERICANS ARE NOT AWARE OF ARGENTINE HISTORY NOR OF ITS STRUGGLE AGAINST TERRORISM. HE EMPHASIZED THAT TERRORISM WAS NOT SOLELY OF ARGENTINE ORIGIN BUT INSTEAD IT HAD BECOME AN INTERNATIONAL CONCEPT. KISSINGER APPLAUDED ARGENTINA'S EFFORTS IN COMBATTING TERRORISM BUT HE ALSO STRESSED THAT TACTICS USED IN DEFEATING TERRORISTS HAD NO PLACE IN ARGENTINA TODAY.

7. THROUGHOUT LUNCH VIDELA SEEMED RELAXED AND FRIENDLY. HE TENSED UP ONLY WHEN ARGENTINA'S PROSPECTS IN THE WORLD CUP WERE DISCUSSED. HE DISPLAYED NO ANNOYANCE AT USG.

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8. EARLY THURSDAY MORNING DR. KISSINGER MET WITH DR. JORGE LUIS BORGES, NOTED ARGENTINE POET AND WRITER. THIS PROMPTED

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MUCH NEWS COVERAGE. LATER IN DAY KISSINGER AND FAMILY DEPARTED WITH MINISTER OF ECONOMY MARTINEZ DE HOZ TO OVERNIGHT AT AN ESTANCIA (FARM). THIS WAS MOSTLY A SOCIAL EVENT.

9. ON HIS RETURN FROM THE FARM, KISSINGER SPOKE TO EMBASSY PERSONNEL. HE GAVE A PEP TALKS TO AMERICAN FOREIGN SERVICE PERSONNEL AS WELL AS LOCALS. HE NARRATED SOME OF HIS EXPERIENCES WHILE IN USG SERVICE. HIS HUMOROUS APPROACH WAS WELL RECEIVED BY ALL.

10. ON FRIDAY EVENING A RECEPTION WAS GIVEN AT EMBASSY RESIDENCE HONORING KISSINGER AND FAMILY. APPROXIMATELY TWO HUNDRED PERSONS ATTENDED. GOA TOP OFFICIALS WERE WELL REPRESENTED.

11. AFTER THE RECEPTION, KISSINGER ATTENDED A DINNER GIVEN BY MINISTER OF ECONOMY MARTINEZ DE HOZ. THIS GROUP WAS COMPOSED OF BANKERS, ECONOMISTS AND INDUSTRIALISTS. THE MAIN DISCUSSION CONCERNED MEANS TO ATTRACT FOREIGN INDUSTRIAL AND OTHER INVESTMENT TO ARGENTINA. THE LONG TERM LACK OF POLITICAL STABILITY AND INFLATION SEEMED TO BE THE MAIN CONCERN OF THE GROUP. LITTLE ELSE DEVELOPED FROM THE DINNER.

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12. ON JUNE 24 KISSINGER PARTICIPATED IN AN OFF THE RECORD PRESS CONFERENCE AND WAS MADE AN HONORARY MEMBER OF ARGENTINE COUNCIL ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS. THIS GROUP IS COMPRISED OF FORMER FOREIGN MINISTERS, WHO HOLD THEMSELVES UP TO THE PUBLIC AS THE "ELITE GROUP" ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS. DR. KISSINGER GAVE AN OFF THE CUFF TALK. HE STRESSED THAT THERE WAS NO QUESTION BUT THAT AMERICANS LACKED KNOWLEDGE ABOUT ARGENTINA'S HISTORY. ESPECIALLY, AMERICANS LACKED FAMILIARITY WITH ARGENTINA'S EXPERIENCE IN FIGHTING TERRORISM. HE EXPLAINED HIS HIS OPINION GOA HAD DONE AN OUTSTANDING JOB IN WIPING OUT TERRORIST FORCES, BUT ALSO CAUTIONED THAT METHODS USED IN FIGHTING TERRORISM MUST NOT BE PERPETUATED. HE EXPLAINED A MOVEMENT TOWARDS NORMALCY MUST TAKE PLACE IF DEMOCRATIC IDEALS ARE TO PREVAIL.

13. DR. KISSINGER ALSO APPEARED IN A QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD WITH ONE OF ARGENTINA'S POPULAR NEWS COMMENTERS. DURING THE INTERVIEW KISSINGER STATED TERRORISTS WERE ONE OF THE GREATEST VIOLATORS OF HUMAN RIGHTS. HE SAID IT WAS UNFORTUNATE THAT IN SOME INSTANCES HUMAN RIGHTS WAS BEING USED AS A WEAPON AGAINST ITS FRIENDS.

COMMENT: THE KISSINGER FAMILY ATTENDED A FOOTBALL GAME IN ROSARIO, WHERE HE WAS INTRODUCED TO THE PUBLIC. INDICATIONS ARE HE WAS WELL RECEIVED BY THE AUDIENCE. HE ALSO ATTENDED TWO OTHER GAMES IN BUENOS AIRES AS A GUEST OF PRESIDENT VIDELA. THE ARGENTINE MEDIA GAVE FAVORABLE AND HEAVY COVERAGE TO THE KISSINGER VISIT.

COMMENT: DR. KISSINGER TOLD THE AMBASSADOR HE WOULD NOT CRITICIZE THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION SO LONG AS HE WAS OVERSEAS. HE SPOKE HIGHLY OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S FOREIGN POLICY TO THE AMBASSADOR, BUT FELT HE WOULD SPEAK OUT AGAINST THE

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CONCEPT OF ATTEMPTING TO IMPLEMENT HUMAN RIGHTS IN LA. HE SAID HE WOULD WAIT ABOUT TWO WEEKS AFTER HIS RETURN TO US BEFORE SPEAKING OUT. KISSINGER WORKED CLOSELY WITH EMBASSY PERSONNEL. THEY WERE GOOD GUESTS AND MADE EVERY EFFORT TO GIVE APPEARANCE THEY WERE NOT EMISSARIES OF OPPOSITION TO CURRENT US ADMINISTRATION.

MY ONLY CONCERN IS THAT KISSINGER'S REPEATED HIGH PRAISE FOR ARGENTINA'S ACTION IN WIPING OUT TERRORISM AND HIS STRESS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF ARGENTINA MAY HAVE GONE TO SOME CONSIDERABLE EXTENT TO HIS HOSTS' HEADS. DESPITE HIS DISCLAIMERS THAT THE METHODS USED IN FIGHTING TERRORISM MUST NOT BE PERPETUATED, THERE IS SOME DANGER THAT ARGENTINES MAY USE KISSINGER'S LAUDATORY STATEMENTS AS JUSTIFICATION FOR HARDENING THEIR HUMAN RIGHTS STANCE.
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