ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)
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[redacted]

Argentina

AL050

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

DECONTROL

DATE: March 8, 1977

SUBJECT: U.S. Human Rights Policy and Argentina

PARTICIPANTS: Mr. Mickey Alurralde, Editor, Carta Politica, Buenos Ai
Mr. (fnu) Toqui, River Plate Corporation
Mr. Frank Zambito, River Plate Corporation, Interpreter

H. Kenneth Hill, D/HA/HR

COPIES TO: D/HA, ARA

Hill briefly described the development of U.S. human rights policy and legislation, and the new Administration's emphasis on the subject which has sparked increased interest in it.

After a short discussion of the current situation in Argentina, Mr. Zambito suggested the conversation turn to the "hard questions." Mr. Alurralde said the USG's termination (sic) of military assistance to Argentina was received with consternation and concern in his country. Did not the USG understand that Argentina is fighting subversion, indeed, that it is at war? American human rights reporting and public statements about Argentina were tantamount to interference in Argentine affairs. He stated it would be easy for the government to fall back on anti-Americanism. Hill responded that the USG acknowledged the threat of urban terrorism in Argentina in the human rights report which, in response to a Congressional request, had been submitted to Congress in the fall. Secretary Vance had announced a reduction of assistance, not termination. We would certainly hope that our efforts in the human rights area would not create hostility toward the United States in Argentina.

Mr. Toqui, who is a lawyer, stated that the people who are arrested in Argentina under the constitution's state of siege provisions are under suspicion of having broken the law. The government is thus acting lawfully. Hill acknowledged that emergency measures are a common and legitimate feature of

D/HA/HR:HKHill:di
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around the world. We are concerned about reported human rights violations which occur when state of siege authority is abused. This is not to say that the government leadership itself is responsible, however, as our report noted.

Mr. Toqui said the junta had chosen to proceed legally against the urban guerrillas rather than follow Chile's lead. But charges against Argentina by refugees are given more credence than official denials. Argentina is being placed in the same category as Chile. Hill disputed this judgment. Chile's human rights practices had been censured in many forums, while criticism of Argentina had not been nearly so severe. Perhaps, Hill suggested Argentina could lay these charges to rest by inviting an objective international tem to see the situation for itself.

Hill provided Mr. Alurralde and Mr. Toqui with copies of Congress's December publication of the human rights report on Argentina. Mr. Alurralde promised to send the Department a copy of a forthcoming issue of Carta Politica devoted to human rights.