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EMBASSY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
Buenos Aires, Argentina

April 29, 1982

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

Ms. Rita E. Hauser
Stroock & Stroock & Lavan
61 Broadway
New York, New York 10006

Dear Ms. Hauser:

I have been over the CELS list of "disappearances and deaths" contained in the report you gave me. I attach my summary comments. Essentially, the CELS cases do not alter the Ambassador's report to the AJC group that there has been one fairly well established case of a disappearance since August 1980. He also mentioned the murder of Anna Maria Martinez which took place in February 1982.

As I noted in our conversation, the Embassy uses a rather strict construction for what constitutes a disappearance. To us a disappearance has to be an arrest by apparent members of the security forces in which the victim is never acknowledged as being in detention and never regains his liberty. Disappearance is a horrifying practice and to dilute its meaning by including police errors or even lesser abuses would be a serious mistake.

I would like to get into the issue of relative and normative standards, as well. But South Atlantic crisis calls. This summer I plan to be in New York. If you like, perhaps we could discuss such matters then.

Sincerely,

Townsend B. Friedman

TBF:bw

CLEARANCE: AMB_____
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ISABEL BEATRIZ ANGEL: She never was arrested or disappeared, as the CELS report states. She was a "normal" missing person who was found in a hospital after human rights organizations denounced her disappearance.

BRUNO DANIEL VETRE: His disappearance was denounced by his father August 3, 1981, a charge echoed by some human rights organizations. The next day the police stated that they were holding him on homicide charges (no political overtones in his alleged crime, or so I understand).

FERNANDO OLGUIN FIGUEROA: He and a friend deserted their Argentine Air Force unit and went to Chile. The Chileans handed him back. His body, as the CELS report states, was returned to the family in a sealed casket. The other deserter presumably is in an Argentine Air Force jail.

ELOY FIDEL SANTANDER: An Argentine draftee who the Argentine Army said killed himself. The CELS report says that there are two different versions of his reported suicide.

ANTONIO RUBEN ALBORNOZ: CELS reports he was an Army conscript and that he died after being put through extremely vigorous exercises by his superiors in an effort to get him to cooperate in an investigation of cigarette theft.

JULIO BARBARO and JUAN CARLOS GALLEGO: Barbaro is a leftwing Peronist and Gallego one of his associates. They were seized by apparent security forces and missing for 55 hours. The case received wide spread publicity in Argentina. Most observers concluded that the operation was done without the knowledge or authority of the Government. The suspected motive was to embarrass President Viola.

GERARDO MARIA BRUGO MARCO: This is the single disappearance that we considered sufficiently firm to list as such in the annual human rights report.

HECTOR ORLANDO PIÑON and JORGE MAGRINO: These two were kidnapped in March 1981. It was thought by most observers at the time that they were victims of men and forces trying to embarrass then President elect Viola prior to his arrival in the United States.

OSCAR ALBERTO GUIDA and ESTELA GUIDA: These two were missing for two days. It seems unlikely to me that they were "disappeared" Unfortunately, even common criminals are sometimes held for several days without their detention being acknowledged.

ANGELO ROMANO: Romano was missing in detention for several days before the police acknowledged holding him. He is referred to in our human rights report.

HORACIO ALBERTO CASTRO: His detention and murder are mentioned in our human rights report. He was reportedly a member of the Socialist Workers Party (PST), a non-violent Trotskyist organization.

MIGUEL SARANGELO: The CELS report states that he was arrested and detained on drug charges without the police acknowledging his detention for one week. As I stated above, this sometimes happens in Argentina in the "normal course" of things.

ANNA MARIA MARTINEZ: A member of the PST she was found dead of bullet wounds after being seized near her home. The government denounced the act as did the newspapers, and most of the political world. In this respect, her death received far different treatment than the similar murder of Horacio Castro about a year earlier. Like the Castro murder, the authors of her killing have not yet been found. Her murder was deeply embarrassing to the Galtieri government -- once again many concluded it was perpertrated for that reason. Others, less byzantine, saw it as police excess.