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PRIME MINISTER'S

PERSONAL MESSAGE

SERIAL No. T 203/83

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US Declassified

Dear Margaret:

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As you know, Argentina has made steady progress in strengthening its protection of human rights. The fair, open and honest elections on October 30 are the latest manifestation of this progress. When President-elect Alfonsin takes office on December 10, Argentina will have completed its return to democracy.

In view of this and other relevant factors, I will be certifying to the U. S. Congress that Argentina has made significant progress in human rights and that making Argentina eligible for arms transfers is in the U. S. national interest. Our announcement will be made on December 7, just before the U. S. delegation arrives in Buenos Aires for the inauguration. Certification will be effective upon installation of the new government.

I know this announcement will be a delicate question in Great Britain. However, as I suggested when we last met, and as subsequent consultations between our two governments have indicated, it is now appropriate and accurate to certify that Argentina has made significant progress in human rights.

We will be informing U. S. congressional leaders and Presidents Bignone and Pinochet of our decision on December 6. Because of our special relationship and the importance you personally place on this question, I am notifying you first of our decision.

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The decision was based on the following considerations. During the past year, the Government of Argentina has made significant progress in complying with internationally recognized principles of human rights. Argentina's human rights performance now meets the test for certification required by U. S. law.

Certification is not equivalent to arms sales. We will evaluate each request very carefully on a case-by-case basis, taking into account any threat that may be posed to peace in the region. We would consult closely with your government on any major sales.

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Significant sales are not expected. Argentina has replaced most of its losses from a variety of sources and President-elect Alfonsin is committed to a significant reduction of the military budget. Moreover, Argentina's difficult economic situation will not support major arms acquisitions. In any event, should Argentina so desire, arms are readily available from other sources, including the Soviet Union.)

In my view, our normalization of relations with Argentina will be in the interests of the United States and Great Britain. Certification will help strengthen U. S. influence with Argentina and enable us to work more effectively to assure regional stability. The climate for dialogue and negotiation will be improved.

I sincerely appreciate your eloquent and timely statement at the Guildhall. I wholeheartedly agree with your assessment of the special relationship between our two nations and the importance of our shared interests and purposes.

Margaret, be assured that I continue to place the highest value on your personal advice, counsel and friendship.

With warm wishes,

Sincerely,

/s/ Ron

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