



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

23 March 1983

CALL ON THE PRIME MINISTER BY THE CHILEAN FOREIGN MINISTER

Thank you for your letter of 22 March. Professor Schweitzer called on the Prime Minister today.

The 30-minute conversation was very general in character and I do not propose to record it in detail.

Professor Schweitzer said that he would shortly be meeting Mr. Shultz in Washington and would discuss with him the certification of Argentina. His information was that the State Department had taken a decision in favour of certification (when I questioned him about this after the meeting he modified his statement, saying that he believed a recommendation on certification had now reached the political level in the State Department). He argued strongly that a decision by the US Administration to supply arms to Argentina would be mistaken. If elections were held later this year the Peronistas were bound to win. They should not be regarded as a political party. The term "Peronistas" was simply a label covering a grouping of parties of which the best organised and most effective was the Communist Party.

The Prime Minister raised the question of the human rights situation in Chile and enquired as to the numbers of political prisoners. Professor Schweitzer said that there were no political prisoners in Chile. All those to whom this description had been accorded were guilty of criminal offences and had had due trial.

He also wished to explain that the three priests who had recently been expelled from Chile were not genuine priests; rather, they were practitioners of "liberation theology". In August 1982 the church hierarchy had requested them not to get involved in political activity. They had nevertheless done so and had acted in deliberate defiance of the Chilean authorities. He personally supported the decision to expel them.

A. J. COLES

J.E. Holmes, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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