

RELEASE IN
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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8934~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ SECTION 1 OF 2 BUENOS AIRES 2090

DEPT PLS PASS ALL AMERICAN REPUBLIC DIPLOMATIC POSTS

EO 12065: GDS 3/23/87 (RUSER, CLAUS W.) OR-M
TAGS: PEPR, PINT, AR
SUBJECT: PRESIDENT-DESIGNATE VIOLA'S PRIVATE VISIT TO THE US-
ASSESSMENT

1. C-ENTIRE TEXT.

2. SOURCES CLOSE TO GENERAL VIOLA HAVE TOLD US THE FUTURE PRESI-
DENT IS MOST SATISFIED--VERY HAPPY-- WITH HIS VISIT AND ITS
RESULTS. THEY SAY HE WAS MOST IMPRESSED BY THE PRESIDENT'S
WARMTH, AND GENEROSITY IN DEALING WITH THE ISSUES AND BY THE
COMPREHENSIVENESS AND DEPTH OF THE VICE PRESIDENT'S AND THE
SECRETARY'S KNOWLEDGE ABOUT ARGENTINE AFFAIRS. IN VIOLA'S VIEW
THE TALKS DEMONSTRATED FULL AGREEMENT ESPECIALLY ON HEMISPHERIC
SECURITY. WHATEVER DOUBTS GENERAL VIOLA MIGHT HAVE HAD ABOUT
HIS TRIP WERE DISSIPATED BY THE WARMTH AND CORDIALITY OF HIS
MEETINGS.3. THE SOURCES ADD THAT THE GENERAL'S HAPPY MOOD HAS BEEN
DAMPENED BY THE FOREIGN EXCHANGE CRISIS, TO WHICH HE HAS BEEN
REQUIRED TO DEVOTE MOST OF HIS TIME SINCE HIS ARRIVAL. IN ESSENCE,
HE IS REQUIRED TO MAKE DECISIONS ABOUT HIS FUTURE ECONOMIC
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PROGRAM EVEN BEFORE ASSUMING OFFICE.

4. OUR PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT MAY BE SUMMED UP AS FOLLOWS:
--THE VISIT WAS A GREAT SUCCESS FOR VIOLA IN BUILDING HIS
STATURE DOMESTICALLY. NORMALLY RATHER LOW-KEY--UNCHARISMATIC--
HE EMERGED IN THE ARGENTINE MEDIA WITH THE STATURE OF A STATES-
MAN CONVERSING SUCCESSFULLY WITH THE PRESIDENT AND OTHER
ADMINISTRATION LEADERS.
--VIOLA AND HIS GROUP NOTED WITH SPECIAL PLEASURE THE PRESI-
DENT'S AND THE SECRETARY'S STATEMENTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS. THEY CON-REVIEW AUTHORITY:
Marvin Russell, Senior
Reviewer

SIDER THESE STATEMENTS TO BE OF FUNDAMENTAL IMPORTANCE FOR US-ARGENTINE RELATIONS.

--WHILE PLEASED BY THE CORDIALITY OF THE ADMINISTRATION'S RECEPTION, VIOLA AND HIS GROUP WERE ESPECIALLY SURPRISED AND IMPRESSED BY THE COURTEOUS RECEPTION BY THE CONGRESS AND THE US PRESS, BOTH THE PRESS CONFERENCE AND WHAT THEY CONSIDERED THE BALANCED, MODERATE COMMENTARY AND FACTUAL REPORTING OF THE MAJOR AMERICAN NEWSPAPERS. THEY INTERPRET THIS AS INDICATING A MORE BASIC SHIFT IN US PUBLIC ATTITUDES TOWARD ARGENTINA--ONE TOWARD A MORE BALANCED APPRECIATION OF ARGENTINA'S PRESENT HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN THE UNITED STATES.

--THE FACT THAT THE ADMINISTRATION ACTED SO PROMPTLY ON THE HUMPHREY-KENNEDY AMENDMENT HELPS TO STRENGTHEN VIOLA'S POSITION ESPECIALLY IN THE ARMED SERVICES AND PREEMPTS THOSE IN THE REGIME'S INNER CIRCLE WHO--NOT WISHING HIM WELL--MIGHT HAVE BEEN TEMPTED TO

ARGUE THAT THE VISIT PRODUCED ATMOSPHERE BUT NO CONCRETE RESULTS.

--THE VISIT IS GENERALLY RECOGNIZED AS THE OPENING OF A NEW CHAPTER IN US-ARGENTINE RELATIONS. THIS DEVELOPMENT, IT APPEARS, IS WELCOMED NOT ONLY BY THE GOVERNMENT BUT BY THE LARGE MAJORITY OF PUBLIC OPINION. THERE HAS BEEN NO OPEN CRITICISM OF THE VISIT AND ITS RESULTS BY ANY MAJOR FIGURE OF NEWSPAPER TO DATE. (THERE HAVE, HOWEVER, BEEN PRONOUNCEMENTS BY ARGENTINE CONFIDENTIAL

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HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCATES OUTSIDE ARGENTINA TAKING ISSUE WITH ADMINISTRATION STATEMENTS THAT ARGENTINA'S HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION HAS IMPROVED.)

5. THREE SPECIFIC ISSUES RECEIVED SPECIAL ATTENTION AND CONSIDERABLE PUBLICITY:

--THE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN'S STATEMENT THAT THERE WOULD BE TALKS ON NUCLEAR ISSUES LATER IN THE YEAR; THE PRESS REPORTED THIS WITHOUT COMMENTARY.

--SENATOR PELL'S AND SENATOR WILLIAMS' STATEMENTS ABOUT ALLEGED PROMISES BY GENERAL VIOLA TO PROVIDE DETAILS ON DISAPPEARANCES; THE PRESS CARRIED THE GENERAL'S CLARIFICATIONS, INCLUDING HIS STATEMENT THAT THERE WOULD BE NO ACTIONS AGAINST THE SECURITY SERVICES.

--THE STATEMENT BY THE ARMY'S SECRETARY GENERAL, GENERAL ST. JEAN,

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BUENOS AIRES 2090

IN THE MIDST OF THE VISIT THAT ARGENTINA WAS PREPARED TO GIVE "PRACTICAL ASSISTANCE" TO EL SALVADOR (AND OTHER COUNTRIES THREATENED BY INSURGENCY) IF REQUESTED BY THE GOES: IN HIS PRESS CONFERENCE ON ARRIVAL VIOLA ASKED ABOUT THE DISPATCH OF MILITARY ADVISERS SAID "THERE EXISTS NO COMMITMENT TO THIS."

6. IN SUMMARY, IN THE VIEW OF ARGENTINE OFFICIALS, THE VISIT REPRESENTS US RECOGNITION OF WESTERN STRATEGIC INTERESTS IN ARGENTINA AND CONFIRMED A VIRTUAL IDENTITY OF VIEWS ON HEMISPHERIC SECURITY REQUIREMENTS. IT HAS STRENGTHENED VIOLA PERSONALLY AND THE POSITION OF THOSE WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT AND ARMED FORCES WHO DESIRE CLOSER RELATIONS WITH THE US. THERE IS CIRCUMSTANTIAL BUT IMPRESSIVE EVIDENCE--SUCH AS THE TIMING OF ACTION AGAINST HUMAN RIGHTS FIGURES OR THE STRANGE DELAY IN A DIRECTIVE TO THE MEDIA TO GIVE FULL COVERAGE TO THE VISIT--THAT NOT EVERYONE IN THE REIME IS WISHING VIOLA (AND HIS POLICIES) WELL. WE THINK THE VISIT STRENGTHENED VIOLA VIS-A-VIS THESE ELEMENTS. BUT HE MUST NOW FACE THE SERIOUS ECONOMIC PROBLEMS NOW AFFLICTING THIS COUNTRY. HOW HE HANDLES THOSE WILL HAVE A GREAT DEAL TO DO WITH HOW WELL HE DOES IN FENDING OFF THE INTERNAL HARDLINE OPPOSITION.

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