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TAGS: PEPRN MPOL, PGOV, SHUM, AR, US, XF, RO, UK
SUBJECT: KISSINGER-MASSERA CONVERSATION

1. DURING HIS 5-DAY STAY IN BUENOS AIRES, DR. KISSINGER HAD A HALF-HOUR DISCUSSION WITH NAVY CHIEF AND JUNTA MEMBER ADMIRAL MASSERA -- AT THE LATTER'S REQUEST. THE MEETING TOOK PLACE AT THE ADMIRAL'S PRIVATE RESIDENCE. BEFORE ACCEPTING THE ADMIRAL'S INVITATION, DR. KISSINGER DISCRETLY CONSULTED THE OFFICE OF PRESIDENT VIDELA, WHICH EXPRESSED NO OBJECTIONS.

2. FOLLOWING ARE THE HIGHLIGHTS OF WHAT MASSERA HAD TO SAY --

(A) HIS POLITICAL ADVERSARIES HAD PAINTED HIM AS AN OGRE WHO WAS ALSO ANTI-AMERICAN. NO MATTER WHAT THESE TONGUES MIGHT SAY, HE WAS NOT ANTI-US. DR. KISSINGER ASSURED THE ADMIRAL THAT HE HAD NEVER HEARD THAT THIS WAS THE CASE.

(B) THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT IN ARGENTINA -- OF WHICH HE WAS A MEMBER -- WAS HEADED FOR FAILURE, UNLESS STEPS WERE TAKEN TO CORRECT THE UNEQUAL AND UNJUST DISTRIBUTION OF THE ECONOMIC PIE AND UNLESS AN EFFORT WERE MADE TO MOVE THE COUNTRY DOWN THE
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PATH TOWARD POLITICAL DEMOCRACY. UNLESS THESE REMEDIAL MEASURES WERE TAKEN, THERE WOULD BE SERIOUS POPULAR UNREST WITH THE POSSIBILITY OF A

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LEFTIST TAKEOVER. THIS WAS THE SAD LEGACY OF PROLONGED MILITARY GOVERNMENTS THROUGHOUT LATIN AMERICA, ACCORDING TO ADMIRAL MASSERA: THE LEFT WAS NOW ON THE RISE IN BRAZIL AND CHILE AS A REACTION TO YEARS OF MILITARY RULE. HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR THE BEAGLE CHANNEL DISPUTE WITH ARGENTINA, PINOCHET BY NOW WOULD HAVE HAD A POLITICAL CRISIS ON HIS HANDS ON ACCOUNT OF THE ECONOMIC POLICIES HE HAS PURSUED. INDEED, PINOCHET HAD FANNED THE INTERNATIONAL DISPUTE IN ORDER TO DIVERT THE ATTENTION OF THE CHILEAN PEOPLE AWAY FROM DOMESTIC PROBLEMS.

IN ARGENTINA, A SMALL GROUP OF FINANCIERS LED BY ECONOMY MINISTER MARTINEZ DE HOZ AND ALLIED WITH SECTORS OF THE ARMED FORCES WANTED A LONGTERM MILITARY DICTATORSHIP IN ORDER TO PERMIT A CONTINUATION OF THE SAME KIND OF ECONOMIC MODEL AS IN CHILE WHICH CREATED UNJUST INEQUITIES FOR THE MASSES. THE ARGENTINE FINANCIER CLASS ALSO SAW THE US AS AN ALLY, MASSERA CAME CLOSE TO IMPLYING, AND THESE OLIGARCHS PROPAGATED THE VIEW THAT THE US SUPPORTED A CONTINUATION OF MILITARY GOVERNMENT.

THE US SHOULD PURSUE THE OPPOSITE COURSE, IN MASSERA'S VIEW. IT SHOULD ACTIVELY ENCOURAGE ARGENTINA TO ACCELERATE THE PROCESS OF POLITICAL DEMOCRATIZATION. PRESSURES TO THIS END SHOULD BE BEGUN NOW WITH A VIEW TO ACHIEVING A DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL SOLUTION WITHIN A YEAR OR TWO. HE -- MASSERA --
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IN HIS POSITION AS NAVY CHIEF AND ALSO ENJOYING THE SUPPORT OF ELEMENTS IN THE OTHER SERVICES WAS LEADING AN EFFORT TO RIGHT ECONOMIC WRONGS AND PAVE THE WAY FOR A DEMOCRATIC OPENING. IN THE JUNTA, IT HAS BEEN HE WHO HAS CHAMPIONED THE CAUSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS. THANKS TO HIS EFFORTS, PUBLISHER JACOBO TIMERMAN WAS NOT OUT OF JAIL. MASSERA WAS HOPEFUL THAT, IF EVENTS COULD BE TIMED PROPERLY, A CENTRIST PARTY WOULD EMERGE WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE BULK OF THE LABOR MOVEMENT WHICH COULD ACT AS AN EFFECTIVE BULWARK AGAINST LEFTIST INROADS.

(C) MASSERA ALSO ASKED FOR US SUPPORT FOR ARGENTINA

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IN ITS TERRITORIAL DISPUTES WITH GREAT BRITAIN OVER THE FALKLAND ISLANDS AND WITH CHILE OVER MARITIME JURISDICTIONS IN THE SOUTH. THE SOVIETS HAD ASKED ARGENTINA FOR BASES FOR THEIR FISHING FLEETS IN ARGENTINA'S SOUTHERN PORTS. AT THE SAME TIME, THERE WAS A DANGER THE BRITISH MIGHT CONCEDE SUCH RIGHTS TO THE RUSSIANS IN THE FALKLANDS. THE ARGENTINE NAVY HAD RESPONDED TO THE ENCROACHMENT OF SOVIET TRAWLERS IN ARGENTINA WATERS WITH A FEW CANNON SHOTS. BUT UNLESS THE US WERE TO COME OUT IN SUPPORT OF ARGENTINA IN THE FALKLAND ISLAND DISPUTE WITH BRITAIN, IT WOULD BECOME INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT POLITICALLY FOR THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT TO STAND UP TO SOVIET PRESSURES IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC.

(D) ON JUNE 27 HE WILL EMBARK ON A VISIT TO ROMANIA. AT THE REQUEST OF PREMIER CEAUSESCU, HE WILL HELP FORM A BLOC OF LATIN AMERICAN CHIEFS OF STATE AIMED AT PROMOTING A NEW INITIATIVE TO GET THE ISRAELIS AND ARABS TO THE NEGOTIATING TABLE. HE RECOGNIZED THAT THE CHANCES OF SUCCESS WERE SLIM, BUT ONE HAD TO DO WHAT ONE COULD FOR THE CAUSE OF WORLD PEACE*
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HE ASKED FOR KISSINGER'S ADVICE. KISSINGER WISHED HIM WELL; IF HE FAILED, HE WAS, AFTER ALL, IN DISTINGUISHED COMPANY.

(E) FOLLOWING HIS RETURN FROM ROMANIA, MASSERA PLANS A PRIVATE TRIP TO THE US IN JULY. KISSINGER SAID HE WOULD BE PLEASED TO RECEIVE THE ADMIRAL SHOULD HE VISIT THE US.

3. COMMENT: MASSERA LEFT LITTLE DOUBT HE SEES HIMSELF AS THE POLITICAL FIGURE WHO WILL PUT TOGETHER WHAT HE CALLED A "CENTRIST" COALITION WITH LABOR SUPPORT. MASSERA IMPRESSES ONE AS A DANGEROUS MAN WHO APPROACHES SERIOUS FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES IN MUCH THE SAME WAY A BIG CITY POLITICAL BOSS MANIPULATES WARD POLITICS. DR. KISSINGER COMMENTED AFTER THE MEETING THAT MASSERA'S GAME WAS PERFECTLY CLEAR. HE WAS A POLITICAL DEMAGOGUE IN THE MOLD OF PERON, DR. KISSINGER THOUGHT, WHO WOULD PURSUE POPULIST,

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ANTI-US POLICIES IF HE WERE EVER TO COME TO
POWER IN ARGENTINA.
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