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THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA



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Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS
Date: SEP 01 2017

November 28, 1983

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT FOR NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS, WHITE HOUSE

SUBJECT: Argentine Certification (U)

ARGENTINE

I do not believe we should issue the certification at this time for a number of reasons:

(1) As you know, Prime Minister Thatcher has repeatedly expressed her concern about certification and arms sales, insisting that US arms for Argentina would be "the single most difficult thing for me." Despite our careful and academic explanations, in the minds of the British general public, certification is considered to be a license for unrestricted US arms sales to the Argentine military. Mrs. Thatcher firmly believes that even a short delay of a few months after the new civilian government takes control in Argentina would be helpful in gaining UK public acceptance of Argentine certification.

(2) None of us know whether the new government in Argentina will show any marked improvement in either human rights or in its attitude to a new invasion of the Falklands. This government has not yet even taken office.

(3) With the INF deployments underway in the UK, this is a time of increased sensitivity in US/UK relations and has far-reaching consequences for the NATO Alliance.

(4) I also fear that certification will add fuel to the smouldering unhappiness that the British have (quite erroneously) about our invasion of Grenada. We need to be sensitive to the fact that in the present politico-military environment, Argentine certification puts an unnecessary strain on an already troubled relationship.

(5) Nor would certification, without arms sales, help our relationship with Argentina.

(6) Finally, there are other countries who have helped us more, such as Chile, with far greater claim to certification now than Argentina.

I understand Secretary Shultz has sent a memorandum to the President recommending that he certify to Congress that Argentina has made progress in human rights and deserves to be certified. Argentina may make some progress in human rights, but they haven't yet. Indeed there are even reports that their

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military will not permit the new government to take office. Our need for continued UK cooperation in both the INF deployments and the reconstitution of a viable Grenada, and on many other matters, far outweigh the US interest in such an early certification of Argentina.

U) Request you convey my concerns to the President before he makes his decision on Argentine certification.

Sap

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+ 5 U.S.C. § 552

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