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Argentina Declassification Project

August 8, 2016

During his landmark visit to Argentina in March, President Barack Obama announced that the U.S. government would declassify records relating to human rights abuses under Argentina's 1976-1983 dictatorship. At a ceremony commemorating the victims of these human rights abuses, held on the 40th anniversary of the 1976 coup d'état, the President committed to releasing relevant records from across the executive branch, including for the first time records from U.S. intelligence, law enforcement and defense agencies.

"I believe we have a responsibility to confront the past with honesty and transparency," President Obama said at the commemoration, where he toured a memorial listing the names of victims and cast white roses in their honor into the Rio de la Plata.

Today, the U.S. government posted 1,078 pages of these newly declassified records. Secretary of State John Kerry presented the records to Argentine President Mauricio Macri Aug. 4 in Buenos Aires at his request. The project greatly expands upon the State Department's 2002 effort to declassify its cables and records related to individual human rights abuses in Argentina.

The U.S. government will release additional declassified documents over the next 18 months as part of a comprehensive effort by over 14 government agencies and departments to search their records and declassify them for public access, consistent with the need to protect national security. The Office of the Director of National Intelligence leads this effort, with support from the White House. Agency records managers, archivists, historians and declassification and information access professionals contribute to this effort.

Most of the 1,078 pages made available today originate from the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library in Atlanta, Georgia, which the National Archives and Records Administration operates. They include records retrieved from several different national security file series and collections, including the Argentina Country Files, individual White House staff member files, meeting files, presidential correspondence files and Evening Notes files. Taken together, these newly declassified documents shed light on the policies of the Carter administration and the role human rights issues played in the U.S. bilateral relationship with Argentina. In particular, they provide insights into the Carter administration's efforts to urge the Argentine

dictatorship to abide by the rule of law, release individuals illegally detained, and account for those who had disappeared while in the custody of the state.

Subsequent U.S. government releases will include declassified records from the Gerald R. Ford, Ronald W. Reagan and George H.W. Bush Presidential Libraries and additional records from the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

Additionally, defense, national security, and law enforcement agencies and departments are conducting comprehensive searches of their files and identifying relevant records for declassification review. The Central Intelligence Agency, for example, is searching its President's Daily Brief files, among other files, for information on human rights abuses in Argentina and will review those records for declassification. State Department records originally withheld from public access in 2002 are also being re-reviewed as part of this effort. Finally, U.S. government agencies will expedite the declassification of the 1977-81 *Foreign Relations of the United States* South America volume so that it can be published in 2017.

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