

## THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

## MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telephone conversation with President Menem of Argentina (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President  
Carlos Menem, President of Argentina  
Interpreter: Patricia Arizu (U.S.)  
Sheila Fernandez Mojan  
(Argentina)  
Notetaker: David A. Pacelli

DATE, TIME March 4, 1991, 4:04 - 4:13 p.m. EST  
AND PLACE: The Oval Office - Presidential Office

The President returned a call from President Menem on March 4 to discuss the vote on Cuba in the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva. President Menem's call followed an unsuccessful attempt by the Vice President to reach him on March 2. (U)

Before the President came on line, President Menem, speaking to his staff, asked if the call was being recorded. He then referred to activities by technicians on his staff. (U)

The President: Hello. (U)

President Menem: Hello. (U)

The President: How are you, Mr. President? (U)

President Menem: Very well, George, and how are you? (U)

The President: I'm feeling well, and I am glad to hear from you. (U)

President Menem: The same. I was calling to send you a warm and fraternal embrace, and congratulations, in the name of the people and government of Argentina for the great success you have had in the Persian Gulf war. You have shown tolerance and courage in pursuing this end, and this has been recognized by your people. We will have President Bush for quite some time doing this job in the United States. (U)

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The President: Well, I don't know about that. But right now, there is great support for our troops and for success in reaching our objectives. But again, this is a team effort, and we are grateful for you taking what I think was a historical position to send forces to participate in the Gulf. (S)

President Menem: Yes. (U)

The President: I think the naval vessels that you provided sent a good strong signal against Saddam's aggression. You sent them early in the conflict, and I know that wasn't easy. It was a very important action. (S)

Carlos, while I have you, can I raise one additional subject?  
(U)

President Menem: Yes, of course. (U)

The President: I am thinking of the United Nations Human Rights Commission meetings in Geneva. Once again, it is seized with the issue of human rights in Cuba. I haven't followed the discussions all that closely, but we are getting down to the wire now. We, along with a number of other countries, asked for the appointment of a special rapporteur to review the human rights situation in Cuba. I don't think that we have too big a difference with Argentina on this, but I believe you think that the rapporteur ought to make a private visit and that he do a private report. (S)

But given the focus on human rights around the world, we think that a public process would put Castro on notice and would benefit the people of Cuba. I am just worried that Castro will view a private investigation and report and see it as a retreat by the world community. So if there is a way for Argentina to support a public process, we would appreciate it. (S)

President Menem: Well, what I would like to say is that our earlier position came from the Rio meeting of the Group of Eight. It is being changed now. We are taking steps to review that decision. It is going to be changed. I have already given instructions after Vice President Quayle spoke to us. The instructions are now oriented to do what you are expressing at this moment. That is all I can say for the present. But be assured that things will work out in agreement. (S)

The President: Well, I appreciate that. We applaud your willingness to look at the situation. I hate to get in touch on what Dan Quayle has mentioned, but it was very important that you know our views. And I want to thank you for your position. (S)

In any event, I also want to thank you for your kind words about the situation in the Gulf. I am so glad to have it over. Knowing of your special interest in the area, one, we are pleased

Knowing of your special interest in the area, one, we are pleased with your serious cooperation with the naval vessels, and two, as we try to move forward with a comprehensive settlement to the Palestinian question, I remember and will keep in mind your kind offer to help out. (Ø)

President Menem: George, thanks for all that you have said. I spoke with the Amir of Kuwait to congratulate him, and with UN Secretary General Perez de Cuellar. But I could not fail to speak to you, which is similar to saying, to speak to the people of the United States. Once again, a very strong abrazo, and if there is anything else I can do, or if there is anything I can do for the cause of peace in the Middle East, all you have to do is call on me. (Ø)

I send a warm greeting to your family and to your wife, Barbara. (U)

The President: Thank you. Give my love to your lovely family, and I can't tell you how much I appreciate this call. Over and out. (U)

President Menem: Good bye, and good luck. (U)

The President: Good bye. (U)

End of conversation