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March 6, 1972

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MEMORANDUM FOR:

MR. KISSINGER

FROM:

RICHARD H. SOLOMON

SUBJECT:

Is Argentina Bumbling Into A "One China, Two Governments" Precedent?

The Argentine government may have unwittingly bumbled into a situation which will test Peking's willingness to tolerate a country with which it has agreed to establish diplomatic relations maintaining political ties with the Republic of China on Taiwan. It is our judgment that this will not prove to be the case, but the current state of Argentina's relations with Peking and Taipei is presented below because of its possible implication for Taipei maintaining political as well as economic ties abroad.

On February 19 Argentina and the PRC announced that they would establish diplomatic relations as of that date. Argentina recognized the PRC as "the only legal government of China," and "took note" of Peking's position that "Taiwan is an inalienable part of Chinese territory." Both sides agreed to exchange ambassadors as soon as administratively feasible. Both sides also agreed to adopt effective measures for development of commercial relations.

This announcement, however, was not followed by an Argentine statement that it was breaking relations with the Republic of China. Taipei, as well, did not sever diplomatic relations with Buenos Aires or withdraw its ambassador.

[Redacted]

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Thus, at the moment, Buenos Aires and Peking have established relations and publicly agreed to exchange ambassadors, the Argentine ambassador has closed down the Taipei embassy quietly and without a formal break in relations, there has been no public announcement of his departure from Taipei, and Taipei's ambassador remains in Buenos Aires. As far as we know Peking has not indicated to Buenos Aires that it will stall on the exchange of ambassadors until Taipei's ambassador is withdrawn from the Argentine capital.

This complex situation apparently resulted from confusion within the Argentine government about Peking's terms for establishment of diplomatic relations. The Foreign Ministry apparently was anxious to be one of the first major countries in Latin America to establish relations with Peking. Through negotiations with the Chinese in Romania they gained Peking's support for a 200 mile limit to their territorial waters. The military advisers to the President of Argentina, however, are not happy about abandoning Taipei. They countermanded the Foreign Ministry's orders to close down the Taipei embassy while President Lanusse was out of the country. Lanusse himself apparently had not been told by the Foreign Ministry that he would have to break relations with Taipei as the price for establishing ties with Peking, and believed he could maintain relations with both Peking and Taipei. [redacted] the

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President's military advisers are enraged at the Foreign Ministry and will attempt to remove the Foreign Minister when he returns to Argentina. They wish to support the Republic of China "to the end." [redacted] the issue of Argentina's relations with Peking and/or Taipei has "caused extreme dissatisfaction within the Argentine military and will probably cause an internal split and struggle."

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While we would not advocate any U.S.G. response to what is obviously a complex and delicate situation, it is evident that at the moment there exists something of a "One China, Two Governments" arrangement. If Taipei and Buenos Aires respond to the current circumstances with a dual representation objective in mind, they will certainly test the limit of Peking's toleration of "One China, Two Governments." If the United States wished to encourage the GRC and Argentina in this direction, there is available either a direct diplomatic representation to Buenos Aires or [redacted] to President Lanusse, as well as our contacts with Taipei. Such intervention, however, holds the dangers of involvement in a potentially unstable Argentine domestic fight, or aiding Taipei in a manner which -- if publicly disclosed -- would undercut the progress made by President Nixon during his recent talks with the Peking leadership.

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Concurrence: John A. Froebe, Jr.  
Ashley C. Hewitt