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From: Henry A. Kissinger

To: Edward H. Levi

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Synopsis:

Comments:
Dear Ed:

The Department of State has received an urgent appeal from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to join thirty-three other countries in providing resettlement opportunities for some 1,000 refugees in Argentina who are part of the estimated 15,000 Chillean, Uruguayan and Bolivian refugees in that country. The Government of Argentina has also formally requested the United States and several other countries to assist in the resettlement of refugees in its territory.

We have carefully considered the UNHCR's appeal and, while we would look to other countries to make a significant contribution to the resettlement of refugees in Argentina (as they have in the past with respect to those in Chile), we believe it would be in the best American tradition and consistent with our international commitments on human rights and humanitarian issues to admit a modest number of these refugees who are found eligible in the context of Section 212 of the Immigration and Naturalization Act.

The refugees in Argentina are in a particularly grave situation. Many of the group we wish to assist have been victims of kidnapping, torture, and murder. The Argentine government and its security forces have been unable to cope with the violent and chaotic situation in that country, and the refugees include a substantial number of persons who fear for their lives because of their political opinions or background.

In Chile, there remain a small number of detainees who face indefinite confinement under conditions that range from harsh to appalling, as well as former detainees who remain in fear of persecution for their political views. To abruptly halt our present program would leave us in light of present law without a continuing capability to assist in the humanitarian situation in Chile and would leave these persons with little possibility of relief.

The Honorable
Edward H. Levi,
Attorney General.
Accordingly, we propose that the present Chile parole program be expanded to enable us to accept, from Argentina and from Chile, up to two hundred additional refugees plus their dependents for resettlement in the United States. We would anticipate that about half of these would be from the threatened community of Chilean, Uruguayan, and Bolivian refugees in Argentina, and the remaining half would be detainees and former detainees in Chile. We do not, of course, propose that we accept any persons who are communists, terrorists, or otherwise ineligible under the law or who may be seeking relief from economic distress rather than political persecution. Individual cases would be referred, as in the past, by the appropriate international agencies -- Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration (ICEM) in Chile and UNHCR in Argentina.

We believe that the proposal to use the parole authority in these circumstances is important to the foreign policy interests of the United States. I hope that you will give it early and favorable consideration.

Warm regards,

Henry A. Kissinger