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House of Representatives
Washington, DC

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April 28, 2011

His Excellency D. Alfredo Vicente Chiaradia
Ambassador of Argentina
1600 New Hampshire Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20009-2512

Dear Mr. Ambassador:

I write to you regarding the on-going issue regarding the Argentine government's seizure of U.S. military property from an Air Force C-17 transport plane. According to multiple press reports, your government took the highly unusual action of seizing cargo from a U.S. military aircraft that landed outside Buenos Aires to participate in a training exercise with Argentine law enforcement last month.

Press reports document that your government's foreign minister, Hector Timerman, personally went to Ezeiza International Airport – accompanied by journalists – where a U.S. Air Force C-17 transport plane had landed with personnel and supplies for a training course with local police on hostage rescue, and demanded that cargo be opened in contravention of diplomatic custom. The Foreign Minister then proceeded to make assertions questioning the motives of the United States, while claiming that our government intended to smuggle materials into the country.

U.S. government officials have consistently maintained the legality of the U.S. military's actions. In light of the ruling by the Argentine courts that no laws were broken, your own court system agrees with this position. The decision to return the cargo now rests in the hands of your executive branch.

Unfortunately, this isn't the first time Argentina has shown a propensity for seizing others' property, both foreign and domestic. Under the current and previous presidential administrations, Argentina expropriated \$26 billion in private pensions and has withheld \$16 billion in private investors' loans since 2001.

As you know, Argentina and the United States enjoy a strong bilateral relationship. In fact, the original intent of the mission was a training session by the U.S. for Argentine law enforcement. This is exactly the type of cooperation that is in the best interests of both of our countries. I urge you to ensure the return of the cargo, and to work towards further cooperation between the U.S. and Argentina.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Russ Carnahan". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Russ Carnahan

Member of Congress