

*Washington, DC* - The U.S. House of Representatives today approved a measure authored by Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) that would compel the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to report to congressional intelligence panels on any information it has about the human rights violations of the military government in Argentina from the mid-1970s to mid-1980s, that government's rise to power and the location of any Argentine children born in captivity and taken away from their biological mothers during what was known as Operation Condor. It is believed that the CIA played a role in Operation Condor. Hinchey offered the measure as an amendment to the Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009.

During Operation Condor, approximately 500 Argentine woman were abducted and systematically raped and impregnated by Argentine security forces. Their children were born into captivity and distributed to members of the Argentine security forces, while the mothers are believed to have been killed. The identity of 80 of those children have been discovered, but the whereabouts of the majority of them remain unknown. The Hinchey amendment seeks to shed light on the unknown fate of these children, who would be in their 20's and early 30's today.

"Given the close relationship with their Argentine counterparts in the intelligence, security, and military community, the documentation of the American intelligence community is likely to contain invaluable information to support ongoing justice investigations and the search for the children of the disappeared," Hinchey said. "There are hundreds of Argentine children who don't know they were taken from their mothers, don't know their real identity or their real family history. It is incumbent upon the CIA to come forward with any information it has to help the current Argentine government identify these children, alert them of their real identity, and hopefully connect them with their biological families. While the former Argentine government may have killed their mothers, there are other family members who these children have never met because they have no idea they were born to a different family. The scars of Operation Condor remain on full display today and it's up to the CIA to help ease these wounds."

In 1976, amidst social unrest and a deep political crisis in Argentina, a military coup installed the cruelest dictatorship South America has ever seen. Illegal detentions, torture and summary executions of dissidents became routine. Cross country operations to capture and assassinate dissidents were organized by Argentina in cooperation with Southern Cone military regimes in what is known as Operation Condor. Over the years, as the victims of the repression increasingly went missing, a new tactic of the Argentine security forces was revealed. It is

estimated that nearly 30,000 people disappeared in Argentina between 1976 and 1985. Many of these victims, known as "the disappeared" or "los desaparecidos," were abducted, tortured, and then dropped far out into the ocean.

Hinchey's amendment is supported by the Argentine Embassy, the National Security Archive of George Washington University, and various human rights organizations.