

KOPPEL: All right.

Now, initially, Carl, the White House denied that story.

And as late as just roughly half an hour ago, the White House was saying it no longer denies it; it now doesn't want to comment.

But you've had other contact with senior members of this Administration today. What are they telling you now?

BERNSTEIN: Well, it was extraordinary. About an hour after the story ran and after there had been the categorical denial, as the White House put it, I received two calls from senior officials within the Administration, both of them apologizing for having denied the story and saying, indeed that the story was absolutely accurate in all four of its essential points.

KOPPEL: And why do you think there was this sudden turnaround?

BERNSTEIN: Well, I think the people that called, that originally issued the denial are honorable people, and I think that perhaps they had been misled, themselves.

KOPPEL: Do you have a sense now -- and we'll get into this a little bit later with our diplomatic correspondents. But do you have a sense that this is going to make Secretary Haig's mission, his role a little more difficult?

BERNSTEIN: Well, one of those people who called to apologize and issue the correction to the denial said, indeed, that the White House was very seriously worried that knowledge of the United States' role in helping the British would make it more difficult for Secretary Haig to go to Buenos Aires.