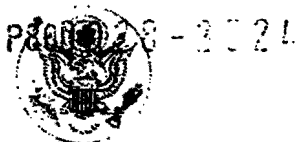


FADRC



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

ACTION MEMORANDUM

8001405

S/S ↑

22 JAN 1980

ORIGINAL TO: FADRC

COPIES TO:

S
D
P
ARA
H
HA
S/P
S/S-S
TMA
RF (JAB)

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ (Entire text)

TO: The Secretary

THRU: D - Mr. Christopher *we*

FROM: ARA - John A. Bushnell, *John* Acting

Human Rights Report for Argentina

100-111933

ISSUE FOR DECISION

Whether to approve the ARA version or the HA version (or parts of each) of the U.S. Human Rights Report for Argentina.

ESSENTIAL FACTORS

The President has asked that you review the Human Rights report for Argentina.

ARA and HA have reached substantial agreement on the major part of the Report's contents. However, significant differences remain in the introduction and in Section 1.a. (torture). The attachment highlights the differences between the reports.

ARA Position

ARA believes that the version of the Introduction to the Human Rights Report on Argentina that is being proposed by HA is unnecessarily provocative. In terms of our maintaining any powers of suasion with the Government of Argentina in the area of human rights, it could even be counter-productive:

-- The GOA is well aware that the attention of the Congress, of the media, and of the public focuses most readily on the introduction to these reports.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
GDS 1/21/86

ADP Declassification Review
DECLASSIFIED
by John Fitzpatrick, 4/24/2017

CONFIDENTIAL

- 2 -

-- The version proposed by HA is far more lengthy and substantially more detailed than those on other countries with human rights records no less serious than that of Argentina.

-- The detail contained in HA's introduction is repeated in the body of the report.

-- There has been substantial improvement in human rights, Basket I, in 1979 for which the GOA should be given credit.

-- The length and weight of the historical detail of abuses tends to submerge the evidence of very real improvements, and makes it unduly severe and harsh in tone. It will be seen by the Argentines in this light.

Argentines will compare this report with the ones on other countries and will be strengthened in their conviction that they are being singled out, that the United States has no intention of recognizing the progress they have made. Our actions in the public domain, and those by our representatives to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights and the private U.S. citizen member of the Inter-American Human Rights Commission have already come under severe fire from the Argentines as being discriminatory. Any further exacerbation of their injured feelings might serve only to cut off our dialogue.

As regards the description of torture, ARA's version refers to the severe psychological and physical abuse that took place, but avoids specifics which we believe are inappropriate in a Government report. Such minute detail will certainly be perceived as unduly inflammatory and provocative by Argentina.

We have thus far retained considerable influence with the GOA, and have used it effectively in pressing for improvements in human rights. The HA version of the report would needlessly inflame relations and emotions. It would push Argentina toward greater isolation from us and the remainder of the Western world, and toward the Soviet Union, which has quietly supported Argentina in multilateral fora on human rights.

CONFIDENTIAL

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

- 3 -

HA Position

The revision of the report proposed by HA is the result of extensive discussions with ARA's Office of East Coast Affairs (ARA/ECA) during the period before Christmas, which culminated in agreement on December 21. The alternative version resulted from a post-holiday review of this text by the ARA Front Office.

The principal differences between the two reports lie in the introduction and with the section on torture:

-- Introduction: HA believes that ARA's revision tends to give the unintended impression that the Argentine Junta's repressive activities at least to some extent are justified, that the tone is unduly upbeat and optimistic, and that it omits essential information about the nature and extent of human rights violations in the country. Although most of the latter are covered in the body of the report, it is important to treat them in the introduction because:

-- the introduction sets the tone of the report;

-- as ARA points out, many readers focus almost exclusively on the introduction; and

-- as this is the first report on Argentina prepared during the Carter Administration, a more extensive treatment of historical antecedents is justified.

Moreover, the length of the proposed introduction is not out of line with those in many of the other reports we have prepared this year. The introductions vary in length from a paragraph to four pages, in accordance with conditions in the country concerned. They tend to be longer for countries being covered for the first time, especially with serious human rights problems.

-- Torture: ARA's version omits mention of torture methods. However, the guidelines approved last August by the Deputy Secretary for the preparation of all reports specifically requests the inclusion of this information. ARA's editorial revisions also soften the tone of this section; the same holds true for the opening words of the following section (on Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment). These sections would be substantially different from other reports.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

-4-

ARA argues that adoption of the HA version would complicate our relations with the Argentine Government. However, Congress established the requirements to submit human rights reports for the purpose of obtaining objective, accurate, and comprehensive information on human rights conditions in all countries. The purpose of the report is not to praise or condemn individual governments. The Deputy Secretary's guidelines call for both objectivity and specificity, and we have followed these norms in preparing all 155 reports. No report has been deliberately softened, toughened, or otherwise modified because of the state of our relations with the country concerned. We should not make an exception of Argentina, or appear to be willing to negotiate human rights principles for other objectives.

Recommendations

That you approve the ARA proposal.

Approve _____ Disapprove _____

Alternatively, that you approve the HA proposal.]

JAN 28 1980

Approve _____ Disapprove _____

Alternatively, that you approve some combination of the two.

Approve _____ Disapprove _____

Attachment:

As Stated.

Drafted:ARA/ECA:GJWhitman:HA:PFlood:mas
1/21/80 X29166

Handwritten notes and signature:
4/21/80
[Signature]



National Security Archive,
Suite 701, Gelman Library, The George Washington University,
2130 H Street, NW, Washington, D.C., 20037,
Phone: 202/994-7000, Fax: 202/994-7005, nsarchiv@gwu.edu