

BQ 004A

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(For countries where loans or technical assistance projects have been opposed by the United States on human rights considerations during the calendar quarter.)

Country: ARGENTINA

a. The Reason for the opposition: During the period from January 1, 1977 through May 31, 1980, the USG abstained on 17 multilateral development bank (MDB) loans for Argentina, voted "no" on three and "yes" on two. The reason for voting "no" or abstaining was the human rights situation described in sub-section c below; the reason for the two approvals was a finding that those two loans "addressed the basic human needs" of the Argentine people. During the period from June 1 through September 30, 1980, there has not been sufficient improvement in the status of human rights in Argentina to justify a change in our voting policy.

b. Policy considerations taken into account in reaching the decision to oppose by abstention the Loan/Technical assistance: The loan proposals were carefully examined to determine whether they "addressed the basic human needs (BHN) of the people of the recipient country" in accordance with Sec. 701(d) of the International Financial Institutions Act of 1977 (22 U. S. C. 262(d)) it was determined that they did not.

c. Description of the Human Rights conditions in the country: The human rights situation in Argentina has improved over previous years but remains serious. Most seriously, fundamental, internationally-recognized rights of the integrity of the person have been violated through the application of the security forces of the tactic of disappearance. The number of confirmed disappearances registered in Argentina this year total eleven but there are unconfirmed reports of twenty-two or more. This total is in contrast to the many thousands who disappeared in 1976 and 1977, more than 600 in 1978 and 44 in 1979. There continue to be reliable indications that individuals detained as suspected terrorists or subversives are subject to torture. There has been no accounting for past disappearances.

The number of detainees on other than common criminal charges has been reduced, although the numbers remaining are still significant. Since 1974, 8,200 people accused of terrorism or subversion have been detained under the special executive powers of the President. By September 1980, prisoners accused of other than common crimes totaled 1,700 to 1,800. Of these about 750 were being held without trial, some for many years or after having served their sentences. About 600 had been tried and convicted in military or civilian courts and another 400 were in trial status. The right of option program, which allows qualified prisoners to choose self-exile in lieu of detention, has been greatly restricted by Argentine Government

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, WASHINGTON
Margaret P. Grafeld, Director
 Release Excise
Exemption(s): In Part In Full
Date: Classify as Extend as Downgrade
Declassify on Relocate

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regulations. As a result, of the 277 prisoners who have qualified for the U. S. Hemispheric Parole Program, only 82 persons have been able to travel to the United States.

Prison conditions have improved, although there is still concern over psychological conditions which may have been a factor in a number of suicides. Earlier complaints regarding overcrowding, lack of medical treatment, improper food, and restrictions on visits have been largely resolved.

The opportunities for the exercise of political freedoms remain circumscribed by the prohibition on political activities and de facto limits on the freedom of expression. Within uncertain limits, politicians and the press increasingly voiced criticism of the Government's actions and plans. Occasionally politicians were detained on the grounds that they had overstepped the limits of the law. The military designated the President for the period 1981 - 1984, while reiterating its ultimate commitment to return the country to civilian rule. However, no date has been fixed for that devolution.

d. How the decision to oppose the loan or technical assistance project relates to overall USG policy on human rights in the country:

-- Since February 1978 we have abstained, rather than voting "no", on non-BHN MDB loans to signal to the Argentine government that we have noted improvements in some areas and to encourage further positive developments.

-- A statutory embargo on U. S. arms sales to Argentina entered into force on October 1, 1978. The Administration did not request FMS credits for Argentina for FY-79 or 80.

-- On many occasions, we have discussed our human rights concerns with the GOA at the highest levels. Most recently, high-level officials of both governments discussed the situation at the U. N. General Assembly in September 1980.

-- The USG has submitted to the Argentine Government the names of several thousand individuals who are either detained or have disappeared and has requested the GOA to furnish information on these individuals.

-- The USG has supported a U. N. resolution (in confidential session) on the human rights situation in Argentina and has supported the creation by the U. N. of special procedures to deal with disappearance cases worldwide.