

A1005

Question: Do you have a comment on the human rights report on Argentina just issued by the Inter-American Human Rights Commission of the OAS?

Answer: -- This is an important assessment by an impartial and highly respected international body of experts. We have been deeply concerned by human rights violations in Argentina and have repeatedly expressed these concerns to the Argentine Government. The Commission's report, which is based on their extensive visit to Argentina last September and on other information submitted to them, describes many of these problems. The Commission has made a number of constructive recommendations, and we believe the Argentine Government will want to consider these recommendations carefully.

Question: Can you tell us something about the organization which prepared the report?

Answer: -- The Inter-American Human Rights Commission consists of seven experts elected by the OAS General Assembly to protect and promote human rights observance in the Hemisphere. The Commissioners serve in their individual capacities, that is, not as government representatives. One of their principal functions is to prepare reports on human rights practices, and they often conduct onsite study visits for this purpose. The Commission visited Argentina last September for two weeks at the invitation of the Argentine Government.

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeid, Director

 Release Excise Deny

Exemption(s):

Declassify: In Part In Full Classify as Extend as Downgrade toDate Declassify on Reason

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BOX 8114 (2/21)

Question: Does the State Department endorse the Commission's findings?

Answer:

-- As I said, this is an important assessment by an impartial and highly respected international body of experts. It is 266 pages long, and we would need to study it more thoroughly before commenting on it in detail. Our view of the 1979 human rights situation is contained in the report we submitted to Congress at the end of January.

Question: Is the OAS report more critical than the State Department's report on human rights in Argentina?

Answer:

-- At this stage, I would urge observers to read both reports and draw their own conclusions. As the two reports were prepared independently, some differences would not be surprising. I might add that, although both documents concern human rights practices, they differ considerably in time period covered and detail.

Question: Did the U.S. Government participate in the preparation of the Commission's report?

Answer:

-- No. The Commission is a body of seven experts elected by the OAS General Assembly to serve in their individual capacities, not as government representatives. The Commission prepares^s its reports independently, and we respect this process. This situation is unlike the UN Human Rights Commission, which consists of official representatives, who act on behalf of their governments.

Question: Did the U.S. Government see the report in advance of normal government distribution?

Answer: -- No. We saw it on Saturday, when all member states received copies.

Question: Well what happens now? Will the U.S. formally endorse the OAS findings or what?

Answer: -- The Inter-American Human Rights Commission report will be considered by the OAS at its General Assembly this fall. We are strongly supportive of IAHRRC activities because we regard the IAHRRC as a very important and effective actor in the recent trend in the Hemisphere toward an improved human rights situation. We continue to believe that the best remedy to the human rights problems of Argentina is vigorous and genuine efforts by the GOA to end violations.

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