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March 6, 1978

MEMORANDUM

TO : The Deputy Secretary
THROUGH: T - Lucy Wilson Benson
FROM : S/P - Anthony Lake ✓
SUBJECT: Argentine Human Rights Strategy

The attached memorandum was prepared in response to Mrs. Benson's request, and with your approval. ARA, HA, and S/P worked together on it, and we consulted individuals in H, EB, and PM. All involved understand the need to keep it on a very close-hold basis.

The paper first puts our human rights interests in Argentina in context with other major interests there, and briefly sketches all possible instruments of positive or negative leverage. It then focuses on those of the latter that we believe are most appropriate to the Argentine situation.

This is not an action memorandum. Rather, it attempts to set an intellectual framework for subsequent decisions. It identifies broad areas of agreement on appropriate U.S. actions, and one important issue -- what to do about the munitions control list -- on which we differ. An action memorandum is in preparation on that subject.

Attachment:
Argentine Human Rights Strategy Paper

~~Department of State, A/GIS/IPS/SRP~~

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ARGENTINE HUMAN RIGHTS STRATEGY PAPER

A. Background

1. Objectives and Interests

We face two serious problems in Argentina: continuing human rights violations and a growing likelihood of nuclear proliferation (plutonium reprocessing).

-- Our immediate human rights objectives are to promote respect for the sanctity of the person and to encourage a climate in which due process may prosper. We also would like to encourage steady progress toward Constitutional, democratic government which, in the longer term, is the best way to ensure such due process.

-- In the non-proliferation area, we seek Argentine adherence to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, full-scope safeguards a deferral of reprocessing, and a "no peaceful nuclear explosives" pledge.

Argentina is a state rich in human and natural resources with which we have important ties (\$1.4 billion investment, \$2.5 billion debt to U.S.). Our economic stake is likely to increase as world demand for Argentina's immense food resources grows, and the country's potentially enormous offshore petroleum deposits are exploited. The relative economic weight of Argentina in hemisphere affairs has been decreasing but is still significant.

Argentina will increasingly become an arms exporter, as indicated by the recent sale of Tucara counterinsurgency aircraft to Mauritania, so that our interest in conventional arms limitation will become correspondingly engaged. (The Ambassadors Goals and Objectives are attached at Tab 4).

2. Human Rights Problems

The Argentine military took power in March, 1976 in the midst of a general breakdown in political, judicial, and socio-economic institutions which resulted in widespread terrorism and hyper-inflation. This move, and the junta's subsequent attacks on terrorism, were generally accepted by political parties and labor unions.

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NARA

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