

RELEASED IN PART
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PE (X34)

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

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PARTICIPANTS:

[Redacted]

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Robert W. Farrand, Deputy Assistant Secretary for
Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs
Leon Weintraub, Regional Officer for Central and
South America, HA/HR
USIA Escort Officer (unnamed)

DATE: September 27, 1988

PLACE: Mr. Farrand's office

Distribution: HA, ARA/AND, Embassy Lima, INR/B,
AID/LAC/SAM/BP

1. [Redacted] opened the conversation on a note to which he returned frequently. He said he had followed the State Department's annual human rights reports for some time (his organization, in fact, publishes abstracts in Spanish of selected reports), and he found them a fair, accurate, and unbiased presentation of the prevailing situations in Latin America. What he could not figure out, however, was how the reports actually related to US foreign policy.

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2. Specifically, [Redacted] cited the example of Peru. The country human rights report on Peru had been thorough and of good quality for several years, frequently and accurately documenting excesses committed by the military or police forces. [Redacted] had yet to see significant changes in US policy toward Peru, particularly as it related to our small assistance program for the armed forces. He certainly saw no signs of behavioral change on the part of the Peruvian military itself.

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3. Farrand gave a general overview of the policy-making process in Washington, placing HA's role in perspective as it related to the regional bureaus, other parts of the Department of State, other agencies (including DOD), and, finally, the National Security Council and the White House.

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Farrand said most existing human rights legislation called for penalties only when the U.S. government could document a "pattern of gross violations of internationally recognized human rights." As regarded the situation in Peru, Farrand said we had called on the Peruvian Government to bring those military or police personnel accused of committing human rights excesses to trial. We had consistently urged that the application of force by the Government to control civil unrest be brought into line with officially stated Peruvian policy.

4. [] said he remained unsatisfied with the lack of more forceful US action. He cited 12,000 deaths over the last five years, with gross GOP human rights violations (including disappearances) having begun in late 1982 under President Belaunde. He noted that trials of offenders had been held only in military courts and that there had been no meaningful convictions to date. B1,A9

5. In response to a question, [] described the Sendero Luminoso (SL) as autocratic, much like the Khmer Rouge. Radical in a Maoist manner, SL decried the lack of "real" socialism in the world. For all its repugnant characteristics, however, the SL remained an indigenous movement and was, in an effective way, more selective and discriminate than the military in its use of violence and force. Thus, SL's reputation for human rights abuses, as bad as it was, seemed better in the eyes of many Peruvian farmers and peasants than that of the Peruvian Army, since the army so often reacted to provocations by SL or other internal opposition groups with massive, indiscriminate displays of force wholly out of proportion to the situation, leaving dead and wounded in their wake. B1,A9

6. Comment: [] who speaks English well, struck us as a legitimate human rights advocate concerned for the future of his country and hoping for a more active U.S. role in restraining the Peruvian Army from abusing its role and authority in seeking to restore internal order. He did not come across as one with a particularly anti-Government agenda. He was, however, unequivocal in his concern over what he perceived as frequent unwarranted and unpunished use of excessive force by the Peruvian Armed forces against the populace. B1,A9

Drafter: HA/HR: LWeintraub *LW*
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