

# ARGENTINE COMMISSION for HUMAN RIGHTS

COMISION ARGENTINA POR LOS DERECHOS HUMANOS (CADHU)  
 Washington, D. C. Information Bureau

International Offices:

Geneva  
 Rome  
 Paris  
 Mexico City

July 28, 1977

Dear friends,

The legislative season here in Washington is finally coming to a close, and we are happy to be able to report significant success in the effort to stop U.S. military aid to the military junta in Argentina. In fact, it could be said that we have all kept the heat on long enough that we finally boiled some water.

As a result, all forms of military assistance will be stopped as of September 30, 1978, the beginning of Fiscal Year 1979. This includes loans, training, and cash and commercial sales of weapons and materiel, and is the result of an amendment introduced on the Senate floor by Senators Kennedy and Church. Additionally, in the upcoming Fiscal Year 1978, which begins in October, there will be no U.S. loans to Argentina for weapons purchases nor will there be any money available for the training of Argentine personnel by the U.S. This very important development is the result of an amendment on the House floor by Representatives Roybal of California and Studds of Massachusetts, which passed by a solid 223-180 margin despite strong opposition by President Carter and the State Department.

At the same time as Congress was taking these actions, we assisted in bringing to the United States an important democratic figure from Argentina, Senator Hipolito Solari-Yrigoyen of the Radical Civic Union party, who was released from prison and exiled last May. During his visit to Washington Senator Yrigoyen met with Kennedy and Church and with two high officials of the State Department. We feel these meetings confirm that a tendency is developing among some makers of U.S. foreign policy to seek an alternative in Latin America to continued support for the brutal military dictatorships.

This tendency, we think, is responding both to the high diplomatic and political costs of past U.S. policy and to the increasing awareness of the American people about the role that the U.S. has played in creating and maintaining repressive regimes. On the other hand, it is also clear that another tendency within the Administration and certainly within Congress wants to continue support <sup>of</sup> the military regimes. Although it is beyond our capability at this time to analyze systematically these trends, we do want to stress that the present is a critical time for increased grassroots pressure on Congress and the Administration to sever ties with the military dictatorships of Latin America and elsewhere.

In the meanwhile, our office finds itself under attack by the Justice Department, which is demanding that the Washington Information Bureau and its two representatives register as "foreign agents" of the Argentine Commission for Human Rights. We feel that this attack stems from the fact that our work has been effective over the past eight months, and is an effort to discredit us by implying that our direction and/or funding come from abroad, which in fact is not true. Even more importantly, we feel that what is at stake may be the right of a wide variety of solidarity and human rights organizations to function within the U.S. free of similar harassment. We are refusing to register and will fight the issue in court. In the near future we will be asking for your support in this campaign and will be in touch with you about it.

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We would like to close this letter by once again thanking people in our network for their help during the past few months' campaign against military aid to Argentina, and to ask for any financial help, no matter how small, that you may be able to give us at this point. We have operated on a shoestring budget throughout, and have accumulated debts which we must repay. Your help would be greatly appreciated.

We can receive tax-deductible contributions through LAOS, Inc., a local church-based organization. (make checks payable to LAOS-Latin America Research and send them to LAOS, 4920 Piney Branch Road, Washington, D.C. 20011.)

Enclosed here are some excerpts from the recent Congressional debates on aid to Argentina, and two articles from the Latin America Political Report, published in London, which explain some of the recent developments in Argentina.

Thank you again for your help, and keep in touch with us.

Sincerely,

  
Olga Talamante

  
Horacio D. Lofredo