

**160. Memorandum From the Bureau of Inter-American Affairs  
Staff Director for NSC Interdepartmental Groups (Einaudi)  
to Multiple Recipients<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, October 3, 1980

SUBJECT

Report on September 23 IG Meeting on Bolivia

On September 23 ARA Deputy Assistant Secretary of State John A. Bushnell chaired a meeting of the ARA/NSC-IG to discuss the previously distributed policy paper on Bolivia (attached).<sup>2</sup>

In considering the recommendation contained in the policy paper, the IG agreed to

—Adopt the Short-Term Game Plan (V-A) for what remains of 1980.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor, Country Files, Box 2, Bolivia, 1-10/80. Secret. Drafted by Swigert on October 2; cleared by Hart (ARA/AND), Morley (ARA/PPC), Eaton, Bushnell, Graham (HA), and in draft by Wolf. Swigert initialed for all clearing officials except for Bushnell. The memorandum was distributed to ARA, S/P, HA, EB, INR, P, PM, INM, the Departments of Commerce, Defense, and Treasury, AID, CIA, ICA, the NSC, OMB, IDCA, DA, IBRD, IDB, and the JCS. In an October 8 memorandum to Brzezinski and Aaron, Pastor forwarded this report and wrote: "the interagency group confirmed our short-term game plan, which involves the minimum of contact and recognition to the Bolivian government until it meets our basic concerns in the areas of human rights, democratization and narcotics control." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Brzezinski Office File, Country Chron File, Box 5, Bolivia)

<sup>2</sup> See Document 161.

—Monitor closely the situation in Bolivia. In the absence of any change in Bolivia's policies or political personalities, meet again before the end of 1980 to review our Bolivian policy.<sup>3</sup>

#### *Short-Term Game Plan*

The IG confirmed our present policy and accepted short-to-medium term goals of: minimizing human rights abuses; greater cooperation on narcotics matters; reinstatement of the democratic process; and constructive—not destructive—economic programs, supportive of Bolivia's return to democracy. The IG also endorsed for the rest of 1980 a short-term strategy to isolate the regime, diplomatically and politically, to promote moderation and to exert economic pressures on Bolivia.

With respect to the international development banks, it was agreed to insist on full compliance with loan conditions of projects and programs which already have been agreed upon and to oppose any applications for new loans. With respect to the IMF, it was agreed to urge the IMF staff informally to be strict in enforcing the current standby. No decision was made in regard to future IMF arrangements.

#### *Future Policy*

The IG agreed that either consolidation of the present regime or a major change in Bolivian policies—not simply a change of personalities—would require a reassessment of the approved short-term game plan, and therefore decided to meet before the end of 1980 to consider again our policy towards Bolivia.

#### *Action Items*

In addition, the IG agreed to the following measures not specified in the policy paper:

1) Make an immediate approach to the other Andean Pact nations to have Bolivia placed on the agenda for the upcoming OAS General Assembly—ACTION: State/ARA

2) Develop better information on human rights abuses in Bolivia (e.g. produce hard figures on numbers of political prisoners)—ACTION: [*less than 1 line not declassified*] State

3) Review the level of staffing at the Embassy in La Paz in the next month, considering security conditions at post, policy objectives, agency needs and likelihood of meeting them—ACTION: State/ARA

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<sup>3</sup> No evidence of another IG meeting before the end of 1980 was found. In telegram 279070 to all American Republic Diplomatic Posts, October 19, the Department summarized the IG meeting and its conclusions. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800499-0864) In telegram 8674 from La Paz, October 24, the Embassy responded to the policy review by noting, "We believe the policy is right on target." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800508-0478)

4) Prepare informal guidelines to assist in any future assessment of GOB performance—ACTION: State

(Human Rights—HA)

(Narcotics—INM)

(Democratic Process—ARA)

(Constructive Economic Programs—EB)

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## 161. Paper Prepared in the Department of State<sup>1</sup>

Washington, Undated

### *POLICY PAPER ON BOLIVIA*

#### I. *THE ISSUE:*

What policy should the USG pursue, in the current situation in Bolivia?

#### II. *THE BOLIVIA SITUATION:*

The military regime presently has effective control over the entire country. Passive disaffection continues, and several reports indicate that plotting to replace Garcia Meza and his collaborators with less tainted elements is on the rise, but there is no open resistance of any significance from any sector. Even if a palace coup does replace Garcia Meza, Bolivia will likely have a military government for some time. Attempts by Hernan Siles Suazo to establish a clandestine opposition government in Bolivia are unlikely to succeed.

An unprecedented level of brutality sets this coup apart from the numerous Bolivian coups of the past 30 years, as do the regime's close ties to narcotics traffickers. Having violated the human rights of so many, the regime, and indeed most elements of the armed forces, will be reluctant to relax the repression.

#### III. *U.S. RESPONSE TO DATE:*

We have strongly condemned this further interruption of the democratic process. Ambassador Weissman was called home immediately for consultations and remains away from his post. The Embassy staff

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor, Country Files, Box 2, Bolivia, 1-10/80. Attachment to Document 160. Secret. No drafting information appears on the paper.

at La Paz has been reduced from 116 to 70 people and all military and much development assistance is being terminated. No new assistance is being provided, and we are limiting our contacts with the regime to administrative and consular matters. Reports showing the present government's intimate connection with the international drug traffic have been released on the Hill and contributed to intense press, Congressional and international interest in this aspect of the junta.

In the OAS we helped pass a resolution deploring the military overthrow, and we have joined the Nicaraguans and others in exploring whether an OAS Meeting of Foreign Ministers should be called to consider the Bolivian case. We will oppose loans to Bolivia in international financial institutions.

Through a series of demarches in various capitals, we have pressed other countries not to resume normal relations with the GOB under existing circumstances. The responses have been encouraging. Thus far, only 13 countries (including none of the industrialized democracies) have issued statements indicating a desire to resume full diplomatic contacts with Bolivia.

#### IV. *OPTIONS:*

- A. Accept the coup—deal with the GOB on policy level.
- B. Distance ourselves—continue our course of the past two months.
- C. Destabilize the Garcia Meza regime—respond to overtures of dissident groups and provide them with material support.

#### V. *RECOMMENDATION:*

In the absence of any major change in the policies (and presumably personalities) of the present regime, we should maintain our suspension of security assistance and curtailment of development aid, further reduce the size of the Embassy at La Paz and avoid policy level contacts with the GOB at least until after the industrialized democracies and other Andean Pact members have resumed normal relations with the regime.

##### A. *THE SHORT TERM GAME PLAN*

Our basic short-to-medium term objective is to change the direction of the GOB towards fewer human rights abuses (including safe conduct out of Bolivia for former President Gueiler and asylees in various diplomatic missions), reduced venality and involvement with the drug trade, full implementation of programs to restore economic vitality and an eventual return to democracy.

We can seek to maintain diplomatic, public opinion and economic pressures on the GOB, attempt to persuade the Argentine and Brazilian Governments to use their influence for improvements in Bolivia and

remain flexible to respond to positive changes in the situation. Specifically:

1. Keep the Regime Isolated

We are supporting the convocation of a Meeting of Foreign Ministers to address in the OAS the human rights abuses and the interruption of the democratic process, provided at least 18 votes for a meaningful resolution are assured. (There are now 17.) We will continue to contribute to publicity on the abuses being committed by the regime, as well as its close links to narcotics traffickers. We will continue our discussions with the industrialized democracies and the Andean Pact members in order to ensure there is no breaking of ranks.

2. Influence the Regime Towards Moderation

We are trying to persuade Brazil and Argentina, Bolivia's most influential neighbors, to use their influence positively. Release of drug-related reports is a significant part of this endeavor.

3. Exert Economic Pressures

At this point only Argentina seems prepared to help a financially troubled Bolivia. Even its aid may be conditioned upon some improvements such as reduction of the drug connection and sounder economic policies. We will not support pending application for new loans to Bolivia in international development banks.

## *B. FUTURE OPTIONS*

Even if Latin American and European democracies regularize their relations in the absence of major improvements in Bolivia, we should be among the last in changing our willingness to deal at a policy level with Bolivian officials.

Should there be major improvements in the Bolivian regime personalities and/or policies (as evidenced by a crackdown on the narcotics trade, a reduction of human rights abuses and more positive economic and political programs) we can then consider carefully whether these merit the resumption of more normal relations and a reinstatement of some aid programs. The widespread domestic and international support our present policy enjoys and the absence of major pressures to accommodate to the Garcia Meza regime permit us to move deliberately in this case.