

CF
61

May 13, 1963

To: Elliott Abrams

Subject: Words Hurt

The other evening I had a long political discussion with a Peruvian professor from American Univ. He was very friendly, and very critical of our performance. At the end he asked whether we had any idea how infuriating it is for Latinos, and how counterproductive for USG interests, when we refer to Central America as "our backyard". The professor explained that people with self respect don't think of themselves as living in a backyard, much less someone else's. He asked me to try to do something about this repeated blunder. I promised I would pass on the word.

George Lister

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cc: Charles Fairbanks ✓

My impression had been that someone in ARA had been fairly systematically changing "backyard" to "frontyard". Let me know if this phrase shows up.

CLZ