

*Chron*

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*Mr. [unclear]*

September 10, 1973

~~SECRET~~ EYES ONLY

MEMORANDUM

TO: ARA/LA - Mr. Jack B. Kubisch  
FROM: ARA - George Lister  
SUBJECT: Our Latin American Labor Policy

The unusual classification of this memorandum reflects the extreme sensitivity of USG relations with George Meany and the key importance of our performance in the labor field to our overall Latin American policy. I am aware of your response to the attached August 2 memorandum. The following comments and recommendations are relevant to that memorandum and to the difficult and complex problems which confront us in inter-American labor relations. Because of their sensitivity these comments and recommendations have not been discussed with anyone else in ARA.

1. The Situation

The importance of USG, AFL-CIO, AIFLD and ORIT performance in the Latin American labor field is obvious. Among other things, our relations with Latin American labor are a major factor in our over-all relations with the Latin American left and in our competition with indigenous Communists, Moscow and Havana. Our relations with, and our influence in, Latin American labor circles have been deteriorating. ORIT is identified excessively with the U.S. AIFLD has far more money than ORIT. ORIT is overshadowed by AIFLD. AIFLD has a pro-management image in Latin America. AIFLD has been pushed out of some Latin American countries and its position has weakened in others. ORIT does not maintain sufficient contact with labor groups which are hostile to the U.S. Our labor relations with Latin America have now reached a critical stage.

~~SECRET~~ - EYES ONLY

DECLASSIFIED

E.O. 13292, Sec. 3.5

NLJ/LIS 06-10

By clm, NARA, Date 12-19-06

2. Some Problems

It is very difficult to obtain frank and objective reports on the situation and AIFLD and ORIT performance because of AFL-CIO domination of all relevant activities. Those who are informed and alarmed are afraid to talk because of fear for their jobs. In addition, George Meany would be most concerned about anything which would seem to jeopardize the \$6-7 million now being provided annually to his people by the USG. Thus, great caution and tact are highly desirable for ARA/LA.

3. Some Recommendations

We need a labor policy which is politically sophisticated and in harmony with both our lower profile and growing Latin American nationalism and sensitivity to U.S. "intervention". Also, ORIT should be allowed greater flexibility in its positions and tactics. It should be in contact with, and representative of, a broader spectrum of Latin American labor.

Bad as the recent news is, perhaps the current crunch between Meany and ORIT can be used to our advantage. Possibly this latest crisis could be made the justification for a quiet (?) discussion with him of the need for a careful, honest and low key review of our entire Latin American labor policy and performance by an objective Study Commission qualified to recommend improvements. Meany might be asked to name one member of the Commission.

Do you think you could ask Kissinger to talk with Meany and to suggest such a Commission? I fear that if you try it on your own with the latter you may be hurt badly, thereby damaging your chances to improve our over-all Latin American policy. Perhaps there is nothing we can do. On the other hand, continuation of the present trend in the labor field will impose a major handicap on your efforts.

Attachment: a/s

ARA:GLister:rm