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To: Harry Shlaudeman

Subject: Human Rights Reports

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By ebm, NARA, Date 12-19-06

Before sending the ARA Human Rights Reports up to D/HA this week, for eventual unclassified submission with the Congressional Presentation Document, I recommend we review them for the basic weaknesses noted below. These are weaknesses which are pretty typical of such papers throughout the Department. However, I believe they deserve final consideration by us, especially in light of the higher priority being accorded human rights, the fact that we have a new Administration coming in, and the certainty that these reports will receive careful, often hostile, scrutiny in human rights and Latin Americanist circles in this country and elsewhere.

1. Government and right wing violence almost always seems to be in response to left wing violence. That is sometimes true, but it should be remembered that some left wing violence is a reaction against undemocratic, repressive rule.
2. Those who get their human rights violated seem to be left wing terrorists and extremists. What about completely innocent victims?
3. Governments take action or conduct operations. Guerrillas make terrorist attacks.
4. There is sometimes a glaring contrast between what we say, or don't say, and what Amnesty and others say. These don't have to coincide, of course.

G. Lister ✓