



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

November 2, 1987

MEMORANDUM

TO: HA - Paula Dobriansky
FROM: HA - George Lister ^γ
SUBJECT: Human Rights Day: 1987

Congratulations on your October 23 memorandum regarding preparations for 1987 Human Rights Day. It seems we are getting off to a good start. I regret that my schedule did not permit me to attend the October 29 planning meeting. Some comments and recommendations are set forth below, and my memorandum on 1986 Human Rights Day is attached. Please be sure to call on me for any kind of help. Human Rights Day is much more important to our policy and credibility than most people in our bureaucracy realize.

1. The post-ceremony panels at the Department are a good idea and went relatively well last year. I am glad to see we have scheduled them again this year.

2. The attached memorandum to Frank Carlucci indicates Cuba may be highlighted at this year's ceremony. There is certainly nothing wrong with that, but it is essential to include right-wing dictatorships along with those of the left, both in the speeches and in the selection of the guest lists. Moscow and Havana will be delighted if we ignore right-wing oppression.

3. South Africa needs to be accorded much more attention than in last year's ceremony. I do hope we can include a South African human rights victim among the special guests. If you wish, I will try to come up with an appropriate name.

4. We should be careful to include some blacks in the invited audience. Last year we did not (ref. attached memorandum). We should also make sure that there are a considerable number of Movement people in the audience, including women.

5. The information packet distributed to guests should include material on right-wing as well as left-wing oppression.

6. Victims and opponents of right-wing oppression should be included in the post-conference panels.

7. I know it is difficult to get the White House staff to focus on these matters ahead of time, but it is very important for the Department and this Administration to make maximum use of the seating facilities at the ceremony. I recall about three years ago several women came in and sat down next to me shortly before the President spoke. One of them asked me what the subject of the conference was. I told her and then inquired as to what organization she represented. She said she and her friends were tourists who were just passing through, and a White House staffer had urged them to come down to fill up the empty seats.

Please read my attached December 16, 1986 memorandum.

cc: HA:RSchifter
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EMichael



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

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MEMORANDUM FOR FRANK C. CARLUCCI
THE WHITE HOUSE

Subject: Proposed Human Right Day Proclamation Signing
Ceremony, December 10, 1987

In each of the last three years, the President has commemorated Human Rights Day, the anniversary of the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, with a proclamation signing ceremony at the White House. The Bicentennial of the US Constitution this year offers a unique opportunity for the President to highlight the important role the US Constitution and especially the Bill of Rights have played internationally, in offering the hope of human rights and the rule of law to nations around the world.

We propose that the 1987 commemoration of Human Rights Day serve as the event with which the Bicentennial Commission caps off the year's celebration of the Constitution. Former Chief Justice Warren Burger and the leaders of the US Congress could join the President in honoring the Universal Declaration, which, like the Bill of Rights, recognizes the existence of fundamental freedoms transcending the laws of sovereign states. The President's remarks could contrast the US Constitution with the flawed law of authoritarian and totalitarian regimes that fail to accept this concept of inalienable rights.

The Human Rights Day commemoration could simultaneously complement our goals in the United Nations by highlighting the situation in Cuba. Armando Valladares, the President's choice to head the US Delegation to the UN Human Rights Commission next year, would play a prominent role in the program.

The audience would consist primarily of nongovernmental organization (NGO) representatives, recently released dissidents, and other members of the human rights community. The Department will forward by November 13 a suggested guest list, with proposed honored guests. The Department is also preparing a draft of the Proclamation for your consideration.

We are aware of the scheduled December 7 summit with Soviet leader Gorbachev and will coordinate with Linas Kojelis (OPL) regarding the best dates for Presidential participation in this ceremony.

Melvyn Levitsky
Executive Secretary

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December 16, 1986

TO: HA - Ambassador Schifter
FROM: HA - George Lister
SUBJECT: 1986 Human Rights Day: An Evaluation

The following is a personal evaluation of last Wednesday's Human Rights Day proceedings. I thought the Day was a major success, with important shortcomings. It is excellent that we have institutionalized the Day at the White House. As with our Human Rights Reports, we should be able to improve our performance year by year.

The two guest speakers, Armando Valladares and Yuri Orlov, were superb choices. I thought, as did many others, that Valladares gave the best speech of the day, absolutely terrific. And it was very good that Orlov dedicated his remarks to Marchenko. I felt your speech was excellent, both as regards text and delivery. Your comments were politically balanced, including non-Communist as well as Communist countries, and you spoke loudly enough to be understood throughout. The President's speech was also very good and politically well balanced (thank you for getting Paraguay included). The selection of Ginetta Sagan for special mention was a wonderful idea in view of her record, her genuine commitment to human rights across the board, and her personal history as a victim of Fascism. Ginetta was clearly delighted and moved, and she asked me later whether her commendation had been my idea. I told her I wished it had been. All of these successes add up to a very big plus, indeed.

I think that those who arranged and supervised the ceremony details deserve a round of applause. So far as one could see things went very smoothly, and that is no mean achievement.

It was great to have Chile represented among the guests (with Zalaquett and Vargas) but I think the overall attendance should have been more balanced between victims of left-wing and right-wing oppression. I feel it was particularly unfortunate to have no representative of South Africa. I understand a couple were invited at the last moment, but I believe it would have been better to do that some weeks earlier.

I saw relatively few Movement people in the audience. For example, WOLA apparently was not invited. It would have been excellent for Heather Foote to have heard Valladares. I recall Heather on one occasion referring to Cuba with the remark: "Oh well, we all know you can't buy The New York Times there and Castro is hard on homosexuals". Yet Heather is a compassionate woman and I am certain she would have been moved by the Valladares speech. It is well within our reach to influence WOLA and many (but not all) other Movement critics of our policies. That should be one of our major objectives.

I hope I am mistaken but I do not recall seeing a single black in the audience other than USG officials. HA colleagues assure me I am right on this point. If so, I vote we make sure to correct this shortcoming next year. I understand Coretta King was invited, but it is entirely possible for us to persuade U.S. (and foreign) blacks to actually attend if we start soon enough.

The information packet distributed to White House guests contained good material and was another plus, but it also lacked balance. I feel we should have included a page or two on Chile and perhaps Paraguay, especially in view of the packet's heavy emphasis on Nicaragua and Cuba. During the ceremony I sat next to Cathy Fitzpatrick, who covers the USSR and Eastern Europe at Helsinki Watch. After opening her packet she turned to a friend two rows behind and called out: "Just one country!" When I asked her to explain Cathy said she was referring to the inclusion of South Africa as the only non-Communist country (I now realize Iran was included, as well). As you know, Cathy is no naive Communist sympathizer. She is an experienced, politically sophisticated, Russian speaking anti-Soviet activist.

Human rights critics, both friendly and unfriendly to the USG, are continually checking our performance for balance and honesty. You will recall Pierre Schori criticized our outer office display for lack of balance, even though I had personally inserted material on Chile and South Africa two weeks earlier.

I felt the afternoon panels were an excellent idea, and another big plus. I heard only the first panel. But once again, no victims of right-wing oppression were included in any of the panels. And when I checked the material

available for distribution, on the table outside the conference room, there was not a single document on right-wing oppression. That is a blunder, playing directly into the hands of Communist propoganda.

I vote that next year we include three panels once again, but with participation of victims of right-wing as well as Communist persecution. That is very much in our interest. It is noteworthy that several years ago, during the Carter Administration, HA arranged a human rights conference with panel discussions. The HA staff was naively surprised when East Europeans and Cubans expressed resentment that only "Communist sympathizers" were included as speakers. In one case, when Isabel Letelier was trying to conduct a discussion, the Cubans and East Europeans repeatedly interrupted. One of the latter was finally allowed to join the panel, to loud applause.

To sum up, on balance, I believe the Day was a major success for human rights and USG policy. And I see no serious difficulties in eliminating this year's shortcomings in 1987. If you agree, I would like to try my hand, several months ahead of time, at arranging for inclusion of black South Africans in the guest list and possibly as one of the speakers. I also vote we prepare and get cleared, once again several months ahead of time, a guest list which will be more balanced politically and ethnically. For example, I would wager we could obtain the Secretary's approval for inviting a local victim of South Korean oppression, always depending on developments in Seoul, of course.

cc: HA - J. Montgomery
HA/MLP - T. Williams