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NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR. LATIN AMERICAN AFFAIRS STAFF FILES, 1974-77

Collection Type

White House Office Files

Extent

6 linear feet (12,000 pages)

Record Type

Textual

Access

Open, but some materials continue to be national security classified and restricted. Access is governed by the donor's deed of gift, a copy of which is available on request, and National Archives and Records Administration regulations (36 CFR 1256).

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Provenance

[Provenance of the National Security Adviser Files](#)

Processed by

Helmi Raaska, November 2002

Scope and Content Note

The NSC Latin America Staff Files is one of many subcollections that comprise the National Security Adviser Files. In general, materials in Staff Files tend to be more routine in nature than those found in Presidential Files. They are non-record working and reference files maintained by staff members in their offices.

The Latin American Affairs staff, composed of a senior staff member, research assistant, and one or two secretaries, had an office in Room 380 of the Old Executive Office Building. Stephen Low became senior staff member during the Nixon administration in 1974. Mr. Low, a foreign service officer, served with the State Department in various locations from 1956-68. He was a counselor at the U.S. embassy in Brazil from 1968-71, and then director of the Office of Brazilian Affairs

at the State Department until he joined the NSC staff. In August 1976 Stephen Low was appointed ambassador to Zambia and David Lazar was hired as senior staff member. Mr. Lazar began his career in the late 1950s in the general counsel's office of the International Cooperation Administration, predecessor to the Agency for International Development (AID). He later served with AID in Peru, Bolivia, Panama, and South Vietnam. In the 1970s Mr. Lazar was general counsel of the Inter-American Foundation, director of the office of Central American affairs at the State Department, deputy to the secretary for economic and social development affairs at the Organization of American States (OAS), and senior adviser to the permanent representative to OAS. At the end of the Ford administration Mr. Lazar returned to AID to be deputy assistant administrator of the Latin American bureau. Mary Brownell was the research assistant, and she was on the staff when President Ford came to office in August 1974.

Much of what the staff did involved responding to comments and inquiries received directly from members of Congress or their constituents. They were a contact point for the Legislative branch, American businesses, inter-American organizations, and the general public, and were often called upon to assist in providing constituent services. The staff was frequently asked for help on behalf of American citizens who had family members either missing or detained in Latin American jails or American companies that were experiencing problems in their various host countries. The Latin American Affairs staff regularly updated briefing materials and Qs and As for the President and Vice President. They prepared talking papers, schedule proposals, and courtesy messages.

Scope and Content of the Materials

Latin American Affairs Staff Files are in two series, a Country File and a General Subject File. In both of these series, the most substantive materials relate to U.S. relations with Panama, Mexico, Cuba, and Chile. Some of the issues concerning relations with each of these countries are described in the following paragraphs.

The strongest materials in this collection pertain to Panama, particularly to negotiations for a new Panama Canal treaty. The materials contain information on the background and history of the Canal, negotiating history, current negotiating instructions, disagreements between the State and Defense Departments over the negotiation process, and the impact of the 1976 presidential campaign on the

negotiations. A large volume of correspondence from members of Congress and the general public on the negotiations and future status of the Canal is included in the files. Information is also available on toll increases at the Canal, military aid, and the disestablishment of the U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) in Panama.

Among the issues in U.S.- Mexican relations are undocumented Mexican workers in the U.S., control of drug traffic, fishing rights, Mexico's oil resources, and the treatment of Americans held in Mexican jails. The materials also provide information on a Mexican proposal in the United Nations for a Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States. Briefing materials and memoranda of conversations for President Ford's meetings with Mexican leaders are included in the files.

Materials concerning Cuba are found throughout the collection. These materials concern U.S.-Cuban relations, relations between Cuba and other countries in the hemisphere, trade sanctions, and the position of the Organization of American States regarding Cuba. Information is also available on Cubana Airlines overflights of U.S. territory, political prisoner Lawrence Lunt, and Angola. The files include correspondence from members of Congress and the general public regarding these issues.

Materials on Chile primarily address U.S. economic and military assistance to the country and allegations of human rights abuses there.

In terms of other countries, the files contain information on fishing rights in Brazil and Ecuador, Venezuelan oil, narcotics control in Colombia, and earthquake disaster relief for Guatemala. Materials are also available on Puerto Rico and consideration of its future status. General issues within the hemisphere include U.S. trade policy, assistance to developing countries, human rights, terrorism, Law of the Sea negotiations, and the Organization of American States.

The files show a pattern of communication between the Latin American Affairs staff and Jon Howe of Vice President Rockefeller's staff. These materials reflect the Vice President's long-standing and continuing interest in the region and the personal relationships he had with Latin American leaders.

Related Materials (November 2002)

The most closely related materials are in the Presidential Country Files for Latin America. Several categories of White House Central Files Subject File, especially

country files, contain related materials. Researchers can identify the file locations of additional materials relating to Latin America or to specific countries from PRESNET search reports, which are available upon request.

Last Modified Date

2025-03-17

Country File, 1974-1977.

(Boxes 1-8, 3.0 linear feet)

Memoranda, telegrams, briefing papers, Qs and As, routine courtesy messages, and correspondence concerning U.S. bilateral relations with countries from Latin America and the Caribbean. The materials are particularly relevant to issues concerning Panama and Panama Canal treaty negotiations, Mexico, Cuba and Chile. Issues concerning U.S. relations with Latin American countries include fishing rights, human rights, economic assistance, disaster relief, narcotics control, illegal aliens, trade, and economic development.

Arranged alphabetically by country

Box 1 - Country File

Status	Title
OPEN	Antilles/West Indies
OPEN / DIGITIZED	Argentina - Economic, Social
OPEN	Argentina - Political, Military
OPEN	Argentina - Routine Courtesy Messages
OPEN	Bahamas
OPEN	Bahamas - Routine Courtesy Messages
OPEN	Barbados
OPEN	Barbados - Routine Courtesy Messages
OPEN	Belize - Routine Courtesy Messages
OPEN	Bermuda - Routine Courtesy Messages
OPEN	Bolivia - Economic, Social
OPEN	Bolivia - Political, Military
OPEN	Bolivia - Routine Courtesy Messages

Status	Title
OPEN	Brazil - Economic, Social
OPEN	Brazil - Fisheries Problem
OPEN	Brazil - Political, Military (1)-(4)
OPEN	Brazil - Routine Courtesy Messages
OPEN	Chile - Economic, Social
OPEN	Chile - Political, Military (1)-(3)
OPEN	Chile - Routine Courtesy Messages
OPEN	Colombia - Economic, Social
OPEN	Colombia - Political, Military
OPEN	Colombia - Routine Courtesy Messages

Box 2 - Country File.

Status	Title
OPEN	Costa Rica - Political, Military
OPEN	Costa Rica - Routine Courtesy Messages
OPEN	Cuba - Congressional (1)-(2)
OPEN	Cuba - Correspondence on (1)-(7)
OPEN	Cuba - Cubana Airlines Crash
OPEN	Cuba - Cubana Airlines Overflights (1)-(2)
OPEN	Cuba - Economic, Social
OPEN	Cuba - Economic, Social - Sanctions (1)-(3)
OPEN	Cuba - Hijacking
OPEN	Cuba - Political, Military (1)-(3)

Box 3 - Country File

Status	Title
OPEN	Cuba - Political Prisoners (Lunt, etc.), (1)-(4)
OPEN	Cuba - President's Qs and As
OPEN	Cuba - Scientists' Problems (open entry policy, etc.), (1)-(2)
OPEN	Curacao - Routine Courtesy Messages
OPEN	Dominican Republic - Economic, Social
OPEN	Dominican Republic - Political, Military

Status	Title
OPEN	Dominican Republic - Routine Courtesy Messages
OPEN	Ecuador - Economic, Social
OPEN	Ecuador - Political, Military (1)-(3)
OPEN	Ecuador - Routine Courtesy Messages
OPEN	El Salvador - Routine Courtesy Messages
OPEN	Grenada
OPEN	Grenada - Routine Courtesy Messages
OPEN	Guatemala - Earthquake (1)-(4)
OPEN	Guatemala - Political Courtesy Messages
OPEN	Guatemala - Routine Courtesy Messages
OPEN	Guyana - Routine Courtesy Messages
OPEN	Haiti - Economic, Development, Social
OPEN	Haiti - Political, Military
OPEN	Haiti - Routine Courtesy Messages

Box 4 - Country File

Status	Title
OPEN	Honduras - Political, Military
OPEN	Honduras - Routine Courtesy Messages
OPEN	Jamaica - Economic, Development, Social (1)-(2)
OPEN	Jamaica - Political, Military
OPEN	Jamaica - Routine Courtesy Messages
OPEN	Mexico - Economic, Social (1)-(2)
OPEN	Mexico - Fisheries Agreement (1)-(4)
OPEN	Mexico - Fronczak Case (1)-(3)
OPEN	Mexico - Mexico-US Interparliamentary Conference
OPEN	Mexico - Narcotics Problem (Operation Intercept), (1)-(2)
OPEN	Mexico - Political, Military (1)-(2)

Box 5 - Country File

Status	Title
OPEN	Mexico - Political, Military (3)-(5)
OPEN	Mexico - Prisoners in (1)-(4)

Status	Title
OPEN	Mexico - Routine Courtesy Messages
OPEN	Nicaragua - Political, Military
OPEN	Nicaragua - Routine Courtesy Messages
OPEN	Panama - Capture of Sea Wolf
OPEN	Panama - Correspondence - Harman, Philip (1)-(2)
OPEN	Panama - Correspondence Relating To (1)-(7)

Box 6 - Country File

Status	Title
OPEN	Panama - Correspondence Relating To (8)-(11)
OPEN	Panama - Economic, Social
OPEN	Panama - Political, Military (1)-(2)
OPEN	Panama - Routine Courtesy Messages
OPEN	Panama - SOUTHCOM (US Southern Command) (1)-(2)
OPEN	Panama Canal - Background and Briefing Material (1)-(5)
OPEN	Panama Canal - Congress (1)-(4)

Box 7 - Country File

Status	Title
OPEN	Panama Canal - Congress (5)-(10)
OPEN	Panama Canal - President's Qs and As (1)-(3)
OPEN	Panama Canal - Toll Increase (1)-(4)
OPEN	Panama Canal - Treaty Negotiations (1)-(8)

Box 8 - Country File

Status	Title
OPEN	Panama Canal - Treaty Negotiations - Congress: Snyder Amendment
OPEN	Paraguay - Political, Military
OPEN	Paraguay - Routine Courtesy Messages
OPEN	Peru - Economic, Social
OPEN	Peru - Political, Military (1)-(3)
OPEN	Peru - Routine Courtesy Messages
OPEN	Surinam - Political, Military

Status	Title
OPEN	Surinam - Routine Courtesy Messages
OPEN	Trinidad-Tobago - Political, Military
OPEN	Trinidad-Tobago - Routine Courtesy Messages
OPEN	Uruguay - Routine Courtesy Messages
OPEN	Venezuela - Economic, Social
OPEN	Venezuela - Political, Military (1)-(2)
OPEN	Venezuela - Routine Courtesy Messages

General Subject File, 1972-77.

(Boxes 8-15, 3.0 linear feet)

Memoranda, correspondence, briefing papers, memoranda of conversations, press guidance, Qs and As, and drafts of speeches and messages concerning U.S.-Latin American relations on a regional basis and with individual countries. Also manuals and procedures for operation of the office and guidelines for dealing with various contingencies. Issues of note include relations with Cuba, Panama Canal Treaty negotiations, the status of Puerto Rico, fishing rights, Law of the Sea negotiations, human rights, trade policy, and relationships within the United Nations and Organization of American States. The files contain good materials on President Ford's meetings with President Echeverria, President-Elect Lopez Portillo, and Secretary of Foreign Relations Emilio Rabasa of Mexico, and President Lopez of Colombia. Materials are also available on the appointments of ambassadors and envoys and Bicentennial gifts and visits to the U.S.

Arranged alphabetically by subject.

Box 8 (Continued) - General Subject File

Status	Title
OPEN	Administrative - General (1)-(2)
OPEN	AID - General
OPEN	Bicentennial (1)-(4)
OPEN	Caribbean - General

Box 9 - General Subject File

Status	Title
OPEN	CIA

Status	Title
OPEN	Coffee - General
OPEN	Commission on US-Latin American Affairs (1)-(3)
OPEN	Congressional - General (1)-(2)
OPEN	Congressional - Mexico (1)-(2)
OPEN	Credentials/Agreements (1)-(5)

Box 10 - General Subject File

Status	Title
OPEN	Economics - General
OPEN	Fisheries
OPEN	Human Rights (1)-(2)
OPEN	Inter-American Defense College
OPEN	Inter-American Development Bank - Replenishment
OPEN	Inter-American Social Development Institute - Inter-American Foundation
OPEN	Issues and Accomplishments in Latin America (1)-(3)
OPEN	Kidnapping/Terrorism
OPEN	Kissinger◆- Appointments, Talkers
OPEN	Latin America
OPEN	Law of the Sea (1)-(2)
OPEN	Messages from the President - Routine Courtesy
OPEN	Messages to the President - After the Election
OPEN	Messages to the President - Upon the Assassination of Ambassador Meloy and Counselor Waring
OPEN	Military Assistance (1)-(2)
OPEN	Military Exercises (1)-(3)

Box 11 - General Subject File

Status	Title
OPEN	Military Exercises (4)-(5)
OPEN	Miscellaneous - Post-January 1, 1975 (1)-(4)
OPEN	Organization of American States - Routine Courtesy Messages

Status	Title
OPEN	President Ford - Appointments (1)-(10)
OPEN	President Ford - Briefings, August-September 1974
OPEN	President Ford - General (1)-(4)

Box 12 - General Subject File

Status	Title
OPEN	President Ford - Memcon - August 9, 1974 - Latin American Ambassadors
OPEN	President Ford - Memcon - August 29, 1974 - Emilio Rabasa, Secretary of Foreign Relations, Mexico
OPEN	President Ford - Memcon - September 21, 1974 - Alberto Juan Vicente Vignes, Foreign Minister, Argentina
OPEN	President Ford - Memcon - September 29, 1974 - Antonio Azeredo da Silveira, Foreign Minister, Brazil
OPEN	President Ford - Photograph Requests
OPEN	President Ford - Qs and As (1)-(9)
OPEN	President Ford - Speech Draft - April 1975 - Foreign Policy Address to Congress
OPEN	President Ford - Speech Draft - January 1976 - State of the Union
OPEN	President Ford - Speech Draft - March 1976 - State of the World (1)-(4)
OPEN	President Ford - Speech Draft - May 1976 - Portland Speech [Foreign Policy]
OPEN	President Ford - Speech Draft - May 1976 - Naval Academy Commencement
OPEN	President Ford - Speech Draft - June 1976 - Puerto Rico Arrival Statement

Box 13 - General Subject File

Status	Title
OPEN	Press (1)-(3)
OPEN	Puerto Rico (1)-(7)
OPEN	San Jose Conference - July 1975

Status	Title
OPEN	Security/Subversion - State Department Guidelines for Dealing with Terrorism
OPEN	Surplus Disposal - Tin
OPEN	Trade Policy (1)-(2)
OPEN	Trip - President's Meeting with President Echeverria of Mexico, October 21, 1974 (1)-(5)
OPEN	Trips - US Officials

Box 14 - General Subject File

Status	Title
OPEN	United Nations
OPEN	Vice President (1)-(12)
OPEN	Vice President - Qs and As (1)-(8)

Box 15 - General Subject File

Status	Title
OPEN	Visit - September 25-26, 1975 - President Lopez of Colombia (1)-(8)
OPEN	Visit - September 7, 1976 - President Echeverria of Mexico [meeting of Presidents not held]
OPEN	Visit - September 14, 1976 - President Geisel of Brazil [canceled]
OPEN	Visit - September 24, 1976 - President-Elect Lopez Portillo of Mexico (1)-(3)
OPEN	Visit - October 5, 1976 - President Perez of Venezuela [canceled]
OPEN	Visits - General (1)-(2)