

22 SEP 1974

Abourezk Fights to End Aid to Foreign Police

By Jack Nelson
Los Angeles Times

Shortly after taking office as South Dakota's junior senator in January, 1973, James Abourezk was visited by a secretive stranger who refused to give his name to the senator's secretary.

The visitor spilled out what the senator later described as "horrible stories" of police abuse of political prisoners in Brazil.

"He was a Brazilian and he identified himself to me," Abourezk told a reporter recently. "But I cannot name him because he would almost certainly be killed."

Among other things, the Brazilian said that U.S. aid in the training of Brazilian police had caused despair among dissenters who had been jailed for political reasons.

"This was a morally crushing thing for dissenters," Abourezk said, "and he told me it might give the political prisoners some hope if someone in the Senate would speak out against the aid."

Since the Brazilian's visit, Abourezk, a 43-year-old Democrat, has led a bipartisan fight to abolish all U.S. aid for the training of foreign police.

He recently pushed through the Senate Foreign Relations Committee an amendment to the 1974 Foreign Assistance Act that would prohibit further disbursement of federal funds for training of foreign police officers at the International Police Academy in Washington.

The academy, which has trained police officers from 77 countries, operates under the public safety office of the Agency for International Development.

The program was started in the Kennedy administration to assist Central and South American countries in combating urban guer-

rilla action directed from Cuba. One of its most notable successes was in Venezuela in 1963 when guerrilla forces threatened to shoot a Caracas policeman every day.

The police academy provided weapons and training which enabled the Caracas police force to defeat the guerrillas and the following year Venezuela was able to conduct national elections which the guerrillas had threatened to disrupt.

Abourezk's amendment, which is opposed by law enforcement agencies, will be debated on the Senate floor within the next week or so when the Senate takes up the Foreign Assistance Act.

If the Senate passes his amendment, as approved by the committee, it will mean the end of the academy, but not necessarily the end of U.S. aid to foreign police forces.

Abourezk points out that a passage deleted from his original amendment by the committee because of an objection by the Central Intelligence Agency leaves a loophole under which funds not covered by the Foreign Assistance Act could be used to continue such training. Abourezk's original amendment would have prohibited the use of funds made available under the act "or any other law" for training of foreign police officers.

The Foreign Relations committee deleted the phrase "or any other law" after CIA Director William E. Colby, in a letter to committee Chairman J. W. Fulbright (D-Ark.), objected to that phrase specifically and said that the amendment generally would have an adverse impact "on the Central Intelligence Agency's relationships with foreign intelligence and internal security services."

Abourezk said that, although the deletion of references to "any other law" leaves a loophole he fears the CIA will use to continue U.S. aid for foreign police forces, he is undecided

about whether to try to restore it on the Senate floor and run the risk of jeopardizing the entire amendment.

Abourezk, who has heard nothing from or of his Brazilian informant since the 1973 visit, has charged that AID funds here are being used to "train police for foreign dictatorships, many of whom imprison their own people for political reasons and employ torture."