



THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

CM-307-75
17 March 1975

#101

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Subj: US Military Presence in Argentina (U)

1. ~~(S)~~ I have reviewed once again the question of US military presence in Argentina, including the recent tragic events in that country and the 13 March letter to you from Acting Secretary Ingersoll. In light of all the facts, my conclusion remains that reduction of US military strength below present levels is unjustified and would render the Group incapable of adequately performing its mission.
2. ~~(S)~~ After reviewing the reasons set forth by the Department of State, both in past efforts to reduce our posture and in Mr. Ingersoll's latest letter, I still find no compelling rationale for a further reduction of US military presence in Argentina.
3. ~~(S)~~ Many of Mr. Ingersoll's conclusions are based upon facts that may well pertain to other parts of our mission in Buenos Aires, but have limited, if any, application to the military. It has not been our interpretation of the messages coming from Argentina that the military have been singled out as being in a "high risk category." Our reading of the reports would indicate the reverse. The Defense Intelligence Agency, on assessments made from reports from the Attache Office in Buenos Aires, concurs in this assessment.
4. ~~(S)~~ The fact remains that the military is frequently called upon to accept high risk assignments as a necessary aspect of military service. For the United States military to retreat in the face of a terrorist threat would, in my opinion, cause a more serious breach in our military-to-military relations with the Argentines than the disservice done to the Ambassador by one department not reducing its complement proportionately. I continue to question whether the proper response, particularly the response by the US Armed Forces to a terrorist threat, is "to diminish the number of targets. . . ." Likewise, I cannot accept the conjecture that should a kidnapping or assassination of a US military officer or enlisted man in Argentina occur,

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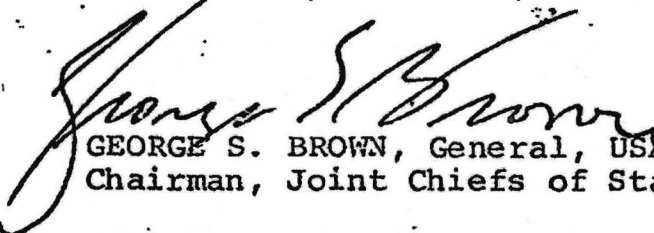
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it would evolve even greater diplomatic and political complications than a terrorist act against a US civilian because of the possible implications of a US military involvement in Argentina."

5. ~~(S)~~ Finally, while the technique of reducing the number of exposed targets may be useful as a countermeasure to an indiscriminate area threat, such as represented by a rocket attack, this measure is inappropriate for the type of threat posed in Argentina - the kidnapping of specifically targeted individuals.

6. ~~(S)~~ In summary, I recommend strongly that we not reduce the current military presence in Argentina.


GEORGE S. BROWN, General, USAF
Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff

Office of the Secretary of Defense.

Chief, RDD, ESD, WHS

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