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#109

THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

I-21563/25  
22 APR 1975  
334 JCS

334 USNIS LP, Argentina

22 April 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR THE CHAIRMAN, JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

SUBJECT: US Military Presence in Argentina

(S) I agree with the intent of your letter; however, after discussing this matter with Ambassador Hill and considering all factors, I must agree with him that a reduction in the Military Group and Defense Attache's Office in Argentina is necessary. Secretary Schlesinger also concurs in this reduction. I am concerned with the safety of our personnel and believe that it is a wise course of action to support a temporary reduction in official US presence in Argentina.

(S) To insure that this temporary reduction is handled properly, I desire that you and General Rosson coordinate this matter with Ambassador Hill and COMUSMILGP, Argentina to insure an orderly reduction and minimize the impact on mission accomplishments.

(S) I appreciate your interest and comments and will insist on restoring the authorized manning levels of both these offices as soon as the political and security situation in Argentina permits.

H. P. Clement

Office of the Secretary of Defense 5 U.S.C. § 552  
Chief, RDD, ESD, WHS +  
Date: 22 DEC 2017 Authority: EO 13526  
Declassify: ☒ Deny in Full: \_\_\_\_\_  
Declassify in Part: \_\_\_\_\_  
Reason: \_\_\_\_\_  
MDR: 17 -M- 2090

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Date: DEC 22 2017

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~~SUBJECT TO ANNUAL DECLASSIFICATION REVIEW ON~~  
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~~AT TWO YEAR INTERVALS, BEGINNING ON 31 DEC 2001~~

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LAC DEF CONTR No. X-

1076





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Authority: EO 13526  
Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS  
Date: DEC 22 2017

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
WASHINGTON

March 13, 1975

~~SECRET~~  
Dear Jim:

In the wake of the murder of our Consular Agent in Cordoba, Argentina, I have again reviewed the exchange of correspondence between our Departments relating to the proposed temporary reduction in DOD official personnel in Argentina. This step is part of an over-all effort to limit the targets for possible terrorist action against the U.S. mission in Argentina. I firmly believe that the wise course of action is to support the temporary reductions which are recommended by Ambassador Hill.

The threat to the U.S. Government personnel in Argentina at this time is incontrovertible. The intelligence reports referred to in my letter of November 26 to Bill Clements provide graphic evidence of this. Ambassador Hill, with the endorsement of the Embassy's Security Watch Committee, has advised me that terrorism in Argentina remains a great danger to our mission. In the circumstances, prudence dictates that we reduce manning levels throughout the mission to the absolute minimum required to conduct essential U.S. business in Argentina until the security situation improves. We must act now to attempt to avert further tragedy and not react later to a fait accompli.

In his letter Bill Clements proposed that dependents of mission personnel be withdrawn from Argentina rather than principals. However, we believe that this measure would not serve to lower appreciably the mission's vulnerability to terrorist attack. Dependents have not been a major target for terrorist groups in Argentina. Women and children have been occasionally affected by the violence, but only as a

The Honorable  
James R. Schlesinger,  
Secretary of Defense.

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SEC DEF CONTR No. X-07841  
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result of physical proximity to a principal terrorist target. The only effective action is to diminish the number of targets among the official personnel in Argentina, especially those considered by the Security Watch Committee to be high risks. All military personnel are considered to be in this category.

The specific reductions proposed for each mission component were carefully programmed by the Ambassador in conjunction with members of his country team. I understand that the Commander of the MILGRP and the DATT participated in these deliberations. It was agreed that the vital duties of the mission elements could be carried out by the smaller staff which would remain. Other important work would necessarily be deferred until the security situation permitted the restoration of full personnel complements.

It is essential that every agency support the Ambassador's effort to conduct the mission in Argentina at the level he deems most advisable in this difficult period. Any absence of unanimity in applying the reduction leads to interagency recrimination and undermines the Ambassador's leadership. A determination by one agency not to reduce its personnel in Argentina will have an adverse impact on the morale of other mission sections hardpressed to meet work requirements with reduced personnel.

In his letter, Bill Clements noted that the U.S. military accepts assignments in high risk areas as a necessary aspect of military service. While I respect this fact, it is also true that the kidnapping or assassination of a U.S. military officer or enlisted man in Argentina would involve even greater diplomatic and political complications than a terrorist act against a U.S. civilian because of the possible implications of a U.S. military involvement in Argentina.

I share Bill Clements' concern that this matter be handled in keeping with the mission agreements in effect between the U.S. and Argentina. Although the

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record is not clear that the Government of Argentina was consulted prior to each reduction in MILGRP personnel from peak levels in FY-68, I agree that it would be desirable to consult in this instance. Accordingly, I would appreciate your concurring in a message to Buenos Aires instructing the Ambassador and the MILGRP Commander to call on the Minister of Defense or his designee to explain these reductions, and to emphasize their temporary nature. We would then be in a position to effect the proposed reduction of the MILGRP from 20 to 13. With respect to the DAO, I propose that we move ahead immediately to approve and implement the proposed temporary reduction from 11 to 7 by moving the Attache aircraft to a neighboring country for a time.

Let me emphasize that the Department of State regards it as important to the U.S. interest to maintain good relations with the Argentine military. At such time as the terrorist threat in Argentina diminishes significantly, it is fully intended that the MILGRP and DAO personnel complements be returned to normal levels. Meanwhile, Ambassador Hill has urged that we not postpone action on this matter any longer. I hope you will agree with me to support his position.

I wanted you to have this explanation of our view in writing before discussing it with you. I will be telephoning you within the next twenty-four hours to solicit your support.

With warm regards,

Sincerely,



Robert S. Ingersoll  
Acting Secretary

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Date: DEC 22 2017

*040 Dep Sec of Defense*

18 APR 1975  
In reply refer to:  
I-4106/75

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

SUBJECT: Review of General/Flag Officer Billets in MAAGs/  
Missions/MilGps (U) - ACTION MEMORANDUM

(C) In a 14 April 1975 message to you, Ambassador Hill expressed concern over the possible downgrading of the general officer billet in MILGP, Argentina. He believes that such a reduction in grade structure would be viewed by the Argentines as "a significant change in our policy of cooperation and support to their democratic government" and "would jeopardize our entire military and political relationships" in the area.

(C) The proposed response to Ambassador Hill states the rationale for recommending the grade reductions and informs him that a final decision on specific billets to be downgraded has not been made.

(U) Recommend that you forward the message at TAB A to Ambassador Hill.

Action Officer: Col J. M. Dougherty

X 77307

Distr: Orig + 1 - Addressee

cc: SecDef  
DepSecDef  
ASD(ISA)  
PDASD(ISA)

OSD Files - OSD Control #1088

R&C Files - I-4106/75

MD Chron

MD Comeback

Gen Fish's Chron

Gen Grimsley's Chron

Prepd by Col Dougherty/abf/18 Apr 75  
Plans & Requirements, OASD/ISA  
4B 682, X77307

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## JOINT MESSAGEFORM

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PAGE	DRAFTER OR RELEASE TIME	PRECEDENCE		LMF	CLASS	CIC	FOR MESSAGE CENTER/COMMUNICATIONS CENTER ONLY		
		ACT	INFO				DATE - TIME	MONTH	YR
1 OF 2		P							

BOOK

MESSAGE HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS

FROM: MR. WILLIAM P. CLEMENTS, DEPUTY SECRETARY OF  
DEFENSE  
TO: AMBASSADOR ROBERT C. HILL, AMEMBASSY,  
BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ EYES ONLY DEPSECDEF APR 75

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF GENERAL/FLAG OFFICER BILLETS IN MAAGS/  
MISSIONS/MILGPS

REFERENCE: BUENOS AIRES 701 DTG 142205Z APR 75

(U) I UNDERSTAND YOUR VIEWS ON THIS ISSUE AND ASSURE YOU  
THAT THEY WERE CONSIDERED IN FORMULATING RECOMMENDATIONS  
TO SECDEF.

(C) WITH THE RESTRICTION IMPOSED BY PL 94-11 CONCERNING  
THE TOTAL NUMBER OF SENIOR SECURITY ASSISTANCE POSITIONS  
THAT CAN BE RETAINED, WE WILL HAVE TO DOWNGRADE THOSE  
BILLETS OF GENERAL/FLAG OFFICERS WHOSE DUTIES ARE  
PRIMARILY REPRESENTATIONAL AND RETAIN THOSE POSITIONS OF  
OFFICERS HAVING FUNCTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES. UNFORTUNATELY,  
IT HAS BEEN NECESSARY TO RECOMMEND GRADE REDUCTIONS IN  
MANY IMPORTANT MAAG CHIEF POSITIONS, INCLUDING ARGENTINA.

(C) A FINAL DECISION HAS NOT YET BEEN MADE BY SECDEF ON

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R E L E A S E R	TYPED NAME, TITLE, OFFICE SYMBOL AND PHONE MR. CLEMENTS, DEPSECDEF, 56352	
	SIGNATURE	
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DD FORM 173

1 JUL 68

REPLACES DD FORM 173, 1 NOV 63 AND DD FORM 173-1, 1 NOV 63, WHICH ARE OBSOLETE.

GPO : 1969 O - 361-249



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2 OF 2

BOOK

MESSAGE HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS

FROM:

TO:

ANY OF THESE RECOMMENDATIONS, HOWEVER, IF THE COMMANDER,  
MILGE ARGENTINA BILLET IS DOWNGRADED AS RECOMMENDED,  
WE WILL APPRECIATE YOUR SUPPORT IN REASSURING THE  
ARGENTINES THAT THIS ACTION IS NOT INDICATIVE OF A CHANGE  
IN OUR POLICY OF COOPERATION AND SUPPORT, BUT IS PART  
OF A WORLDWIDE REDUCTION IN GRADE STRUCTURE REQUIRED  
BY LAW.

(U) I HAVE FORWARDED A COPY OF YOUR MESSAGE TO  
MR. SCHLESINGER SO THAT HE MAY ALSO KNOW YOUR VIEWS.

(U) WARM REGARDS.

~~SDS 31 DEC 01~~

SSO NOTE: DELIVER DURING DUTY

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SIGNATURE

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1 JUL 68

REPLACES DD FORM 173, 1 NOV 63 AND DD FORM 173-1, 1 NOV 63, WHICH ARE OBSOLETE.

GPO: 1968 O-341-361



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CABLE CH	<input type="checkbox"/>
FILE	<input type="checkbox"/>

~~SECRET~~ 142225Z APR 75 VIA SRF CHANNELS  
SSQ DIA PLS PASS DEPUTY SECDEF

FM AMBASSADOR HILL, BUENOS AIRES 701

TO THE PENTAGON FOR DEPUTY SECDEF

PRIORITY  
FROM AMBASSADOR ROBERT C. HILL, AMEMBASSY, BUENOS AIRES, ARG.  
TO HON WILLIAM P. CLEMENTS, JR., DEPUTY SECDEF, WASH, DC  
BT

~~SECRET~~ BUENOS AIRES ~~EYES ONLY~~

AS A RESULT OF THE FY-75 SECURITY ASSISTANCE APPROPRIATIONS ACT AND THE ATTENDANT LIMITING OF GENERAL/FLAG OFFICERS ASSIGNED TO THE SECURITY ASSISTANCE ORGANIZATION, I HAVE BECOME VERY CONCERNED OVER THE POSSIBILITY OF DOWNGRADING THE GENERAL OFFICER BILLET IN THE MILITARY GROUP TO AN 26. IN THIS REGARD, I HAVE HAD SOME PRIVATE COMMUNICATION TO GENERAL ROSSON AND ASST SECDEF ELLSWORTH, ALTHOUGH I REALIZE BOTH THE ASST SEC I.S.A. AND THE GENERAL HAVE PASSED THE INFORMATION TO THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE. AS HEAD OF THE COUNTRY TEAM IN ARGENTINA, I WOULD LIKE TO REITERATE MY POSITION TO YOU TO BE SURE THAT THE STRENGTH OF MY OPINION ON THIS PARTICULAR MATTER IS FULLY UNDERSTOOD.

THE MILGP AT ONE TIME HAD 62 PERSONNEL, SUBSEQUENTLY DRAWN DOWN TO 29, AND IN THE SUMMER OF 1974 THEY WERE REDUCED TO 20 FOR SECURITY REASONS. THEY ARE NOW IN THE PROCESS OF TEMPORARILY DRAWING DOWN TO 13 PERSONNEL, AGAIN FOR SECURITY REASONS. THE ABOVE DRAWDOWN TO 13 HAS NOT YET BEEN BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE -- PRIMARILY BECAUSE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE'S PROPOSED VISIT HERE ON THE 23RD OF APRIL.

IN MY EXPERIENCE AS A GOVERNMENT SERVANT IN MANY FOREIGN COUNTRIES, I HAVE NEVER KNOWN A PEOPLE WITH A GREATER SENSE OF PRIDE THAN THE ARGENTINE. ARGENTINA HAS ALWAYS VIEWED WITH CONCERN THE APPARENT INSALANCE IN U.S. INTEREST BETWEEN THEIR COUNTRY AND BRAZIL, WHERE THREE FLAG/GENERAL OFFICERS CURRENTLY HEAD THE MILITARY MISSIONS, AS COMPARED TO ONE GENERAL OFFICER HERE. TO REMOVE THE GENERAL OFFICER BILLET AT THIS TIME, WHILE WE ARE TRYING TO EMPHASIZE THAT OUR REDUCTION IN TOTAL MISSION STRENGTH IS A TEMPORARY

4106/25

C4/77A

~~EYES ONLY~~

SECURITY MEASURES, WOULD CLEARLY INDICATE TO THE ARGENTINES  
A SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN OUR POLICY OF COOPERATION AND SUPPORT  
TO THEIR DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT;

I FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT THE LOSS OF THE BILLET WOULD JEOPAR-  
DIZE OUR ENTIRE MILITARY AND POLITICAL RELATIONSHIPS IN THIS  
AREA OF THE WORLD. I RECOMMEND THAT UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES  
SHOULD THIS POST LOSE ITS GENERAL OFFICER BILLET.

BT

SSO NOTE: DELIVER DURING DUTY HOURS  
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