

DECLASSIFIED IN FULL
Authority: EO 13526
Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS
Date: JAN 02 2018

~~SECRET~~

#4-24

Proposed Reduction in MILGP Argentina

BACKGROUND

- 5 November 1974, Ambassador Hill sent a message to STATE (TAB A) recommending reduction in official US personnel in Argentina, citing the increasing terrorist actions as the basis for his proposal.
- 13 November 1974, the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff forwarded a memorandum for the DEPSECDEF wherein he strongly recommended that there be no further reductions (TAB B).
- Mr. Ingersoll, in a letter to Mr. Clements dated 26 November 1974 (TAB C) made reference to increasing terrorist activities and requested his concurrence to instruct AMEMB Buenos Aires to:
 - Reduce the MILGP from 20 to 13.
 - Reduce the DAO from 11 to 7.
- Mr. Clements responded on 9 December 1974 (TAB D) and recommended that:
 - Dependents be withdrawn prior to removing US military.
 - We keep further reductions of military personnel under advisement.

Argentina 000-1

14 Mar 75

*CDS -
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~~EXEMPTED BY EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652~~
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APPROVED BY ASD/ISA
14 March 1975

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Office of the Secretary of Defense 5 U.S.C. § 552
Chief, RDD, ESD, WHS +
Date: 02 JAN 2018 Authority: EO 13526
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Declassify in Part: _____
Reason: _____
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CURRENT ISSUE

- USCINCSOUTH, suspecting that previous efforts to reduce the MILGP would be renewed, recommended against any reduction in a message dated 7 March 1975 (TAB E).
- On 13 March 1975, on the basis of the terrorist slaying of the US Consular Agent in Argentina, the DEPSECSTATE reopened the case for reducing the Military Group. He stated that:
 - The wise course of action is to support the temporary reduction;
 - the threat to USG personnel is "incontrovertible."
 - The only effective action against terrorism is to diminish targets.
 - Any absence of unanimity in applying the reduction undermines the Ambassador's leadership.
 - Assassination of US military would possibly give implication of US military involvement in Argentina.
 - He desires your concurrence in a message to AMEMB Buenos Aires instructing Ambassador and MILGP Commander to explain the "temporary" reduction (from 20 assigned to 13) to the MOD.
 - He also proposes a reduction in the DAO from 11 to 7.

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- Since the Ambassador believes that the terrorist situation in Argentina continues to require a diminished official US presence recommend that:
 - The implementation of this reduction by the Ambassador be coordinated with USCINCSOUTH.
 - To assure an orderly reduction, and
 - To minimize the impact on the mission of the MILGP while at the same time recognizing the urgency of the situation.

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TAB
A

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IAW EO 13526, Section 3.5
Date: JAN 02 2018

NATIONAL MILITARY COMMAND CENTER
MESSAGE CENTER

VZCZCHLT353
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88955
SECT 01 OF 88955

ACTION
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CSAF WASH DC
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CSA WASH DC
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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8710
BT

IMMEDIATE

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~~SECTION 1 OF 2 BUENOS AIRES 8102~~

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROGERS, ARA, FROM AMBASSADOR HILL

TAGS: ASEC, APER, AR
SUBJECT: STAFF REDUCTION

REF: STATE 233589

1. I HAVE REVIEWED THE NEED TO CUT THE PRESENCE OF USG PERSONNEL IN ARGENTINA IN THE LIGHT OF CONTINUING AND INCREASINGLY DARING TERRORIST ACTS. THIS MATTER WAS DISCUSSED LAST WEEK (OCTOBER 28-31, 1974) BY DEPUTY ASST SECRETARY WILLIAM BOWLER AND COUNTRY DIRECTOR FRANK ORTIZ WITH ME, THE EMBASSY COUNTRY TEAM AND THE SECURITY WATCH COMMITTEE.

2. NOVEMBER 1, THE CHIEF OF FEDERAL POLICE, ALBERTO VILLAR, WAS ASSASSINATED, PRESUMABLY BY THE "MONTONERO" ORGANIZATION. THIS SERIOUS EVENT HAS LED ME TO REASSESS ONCE AGAIN THE VULNERABILITY OF THE EMBASSY AND THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROTECTION AFFORDED TO OUR PREMISES.

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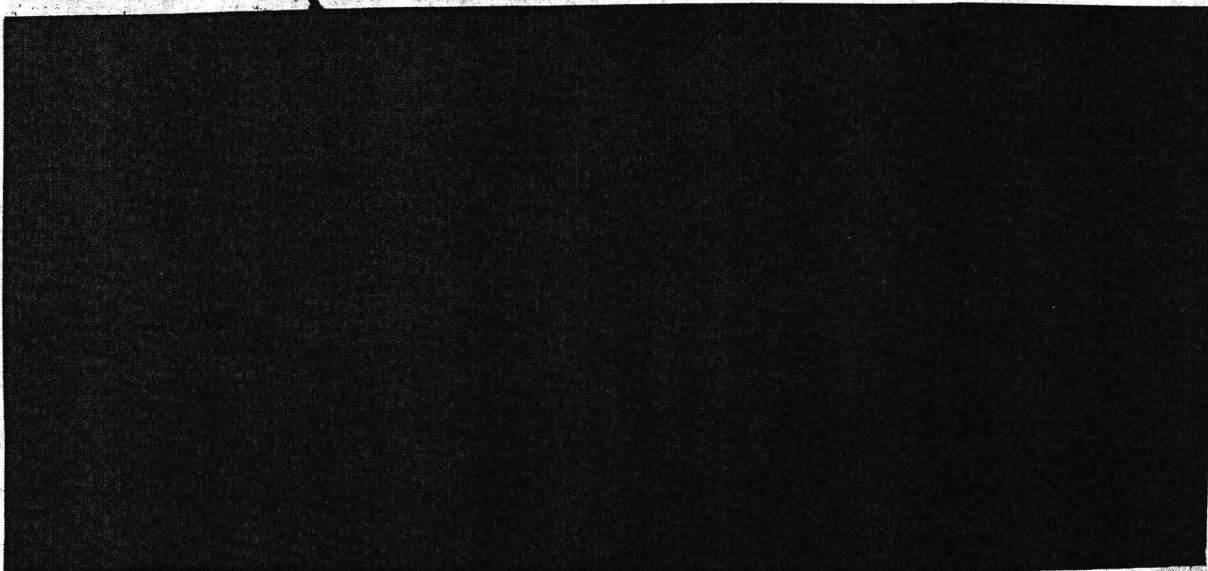
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AND PERSONNEL BY LOCAL POLICE FORCES. THE LATE CHIEF OF POLICE PERSONALLY HAD ALLOCATED APPROXIMATELY ONE HUNDRED FEDERAL POLICE OFFICERS TO PROVIDE PROTECTIVE SERVICES TO THE CHANCERY, THE AMBASSADOR AND RANKING EMBASSY OFFICERS, AND THEIR RESIDENCES, UPON INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE LATE PRESIDENT JUAN D. PERON.

3. WHILE WE HAVE NO REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THE GOA'S INTEREST IN PROTECTING USG OFFICIALS AND PROPERTY WILL LESSEN, WE MUST CONCLUDE FROM THE SUCCESSFUL ASSASSINATION OF THE POLICE CHIEF THAT THE CAPABILITIES OF ORGANIZED TERRORIST GROUPS REMAIN VERY HIGH AND THAT THE POSSIBILITY EXISTS OF THEIR PENETRATION OF POLICE HEADQUARTERS.

4. ~~ASSUMING THIS POSSIBILITY AS WELL AS THAT OF A SPECTACULAR AND PERHAPS DESPERATE TERRORIST ACTIONS, I RECOMMEND AN EARLY AND SYSTEMATIC REDUCTION OF US PROGRAM AND DIRECT PROGRAM SUPPORT PERSONNEL TO THE LEVEL OF 73. THIS FIGURE DOES NOT INCLUDE SECURITY AND COMMUNICATIONS PERSONNEL, WHO UNDER EXISTING CIRCUMSTANCES BECOME MORE INDISPENSABLE THAN BEFORE. THE COMBINED SECURITY, MSG AND COMMUNICATIONS COMPLEMENT NOW TOTALS 23.~~

5. I RECOMMEND A TEMPORARY REDUCTION OF USG POSITIONS IN ARGENTINA BY 27, AS FOLLOWS:



PAGE 2

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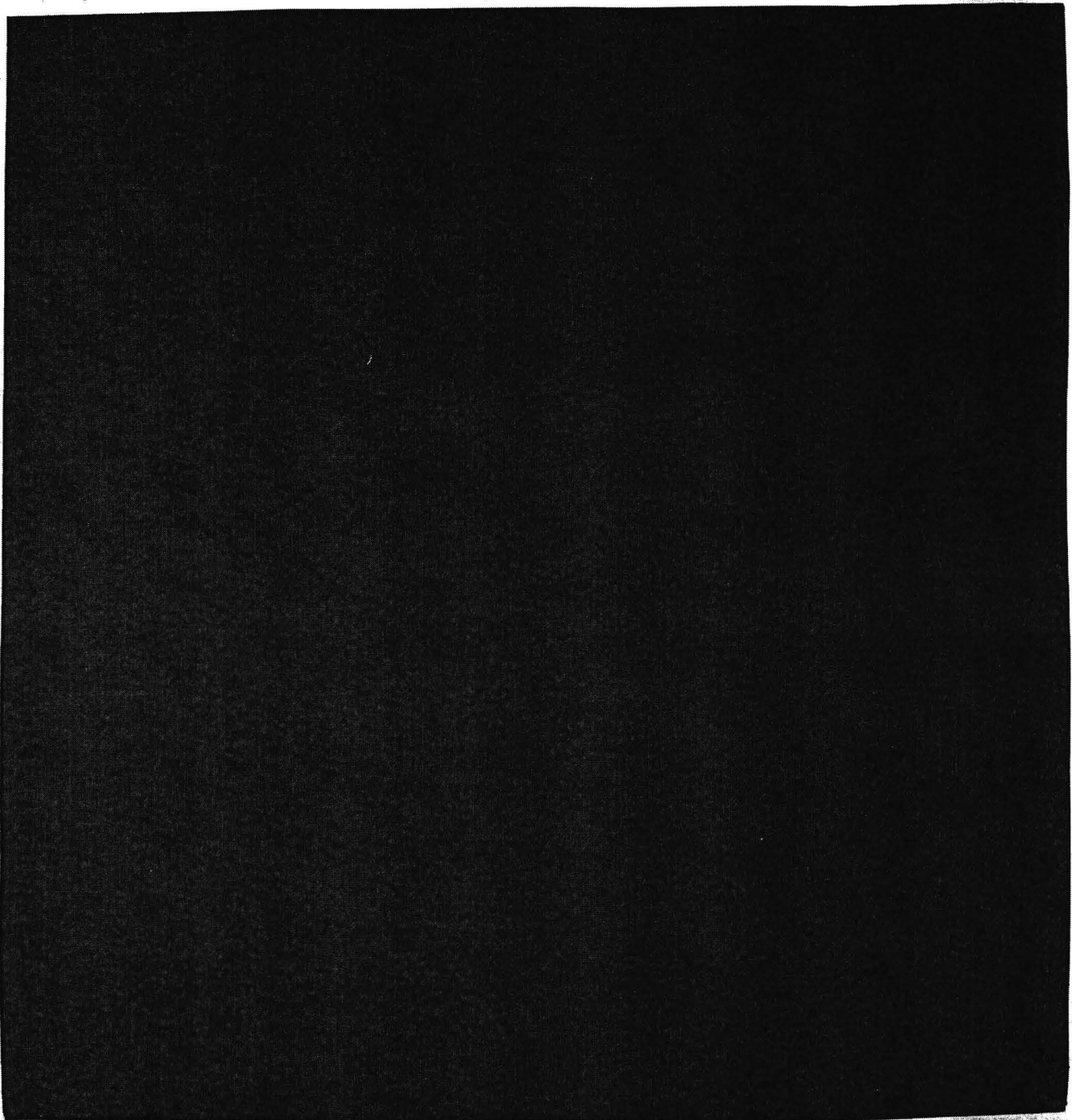
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CIA E.O. 13526 Section 3.3(b)(1)

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CIA E.O. 13526 Section 3.3(b)(1)



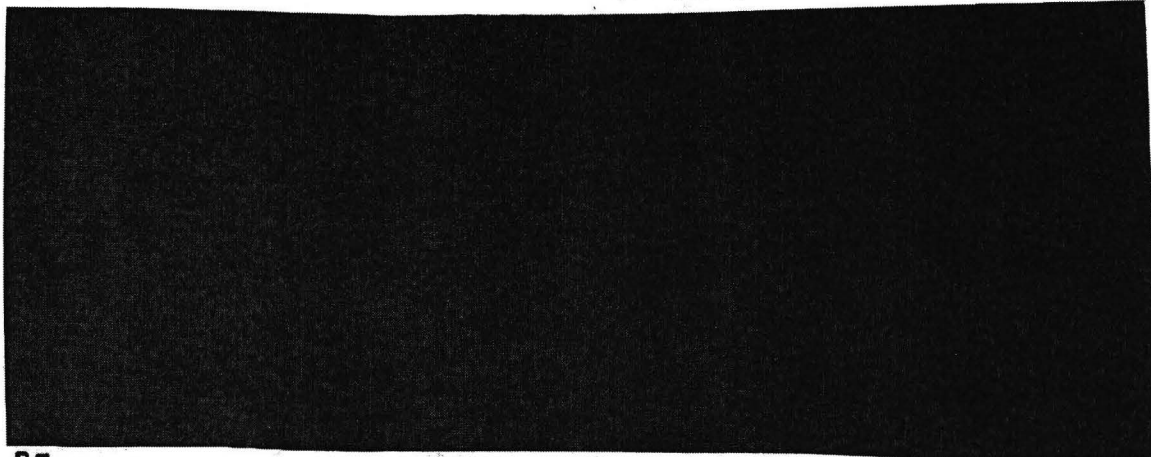
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PAGE 4

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NATIONAL MILITARY COMMAND CENTER
MESSAGE CENTER

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88960
SECT 02 OF 88955

ACTION
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CSA WASH DC
FILE(01)20
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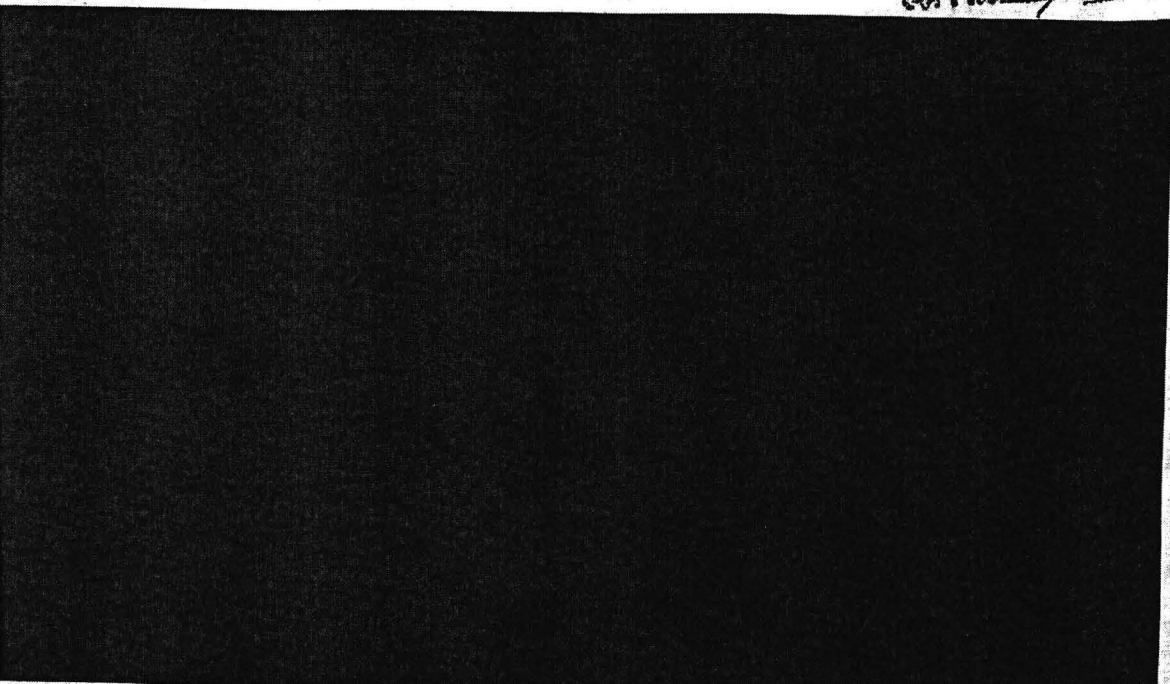
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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8711
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6. IF DEPARTMENT CONCURS WITH ABOVE RECOMMENDATIONS, I SUGGEST THAT PERSONNEL ACTIONS BE EXPEDITED IN ORDER THAT AS MANY AFFECTED PERSONNEL AS POSSIBLE AND THEIR FAMILIES DEPART BUENOS AIRES BEFORE CHRISTMAS. THE AMERICAN SCHOOL'S FIRST SEMESTER ENDS DECEMBER 13 (THIRTEEN). I NEED NOT REMIND THE DEPARTMENT AND OTHER AFFECTED AGENCIES THAT THOSE OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES WHO MUST DEPART BEFORE THE END OF THEIR NORMAL TOUR ARE ENTITLED TO SPECIAL CONSIDERATION FOR THE HARDSHIPS AND SACRIFICES THAT AN UNEXPECTED EARLY DEPARTURE MAY CAUSE THEM.

7. I ALSO POINT OUT THAT BUENOS AIRES IS TO BE SEAT OF MEETING OF FOREIGN MINISTERS OF AMERICAN REPUBLICS IN MARCH 1975 AND THAT EMBASSY WORKLOAD WILL INCREASE VERY NOTICEABLY IN COMING MONTHS IN PREPARATION FOR EVENT. WHAT HAVE HERETOFORE BEEN DEEMED ESSENTIAL PROGRAMS MAY HAVE TO BE DRASTICALLY CURTAILED OR ELIMINATED.

8. I APPRECIATE SYMPATHETIC UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORT OF DEPARTMENT AND OTHER US AGENCIES IN SEEING US THROUGH THIS DIFFICULT PERIOD. I HOPE THAT WHEN SECURITY SITUATION IMPROVES, EMBASSY WILL BE ABLE RESUME MORE NORMAL OPERATIONS, AND AGAIN BE STAFFED TO MEET OUR REQUIREMENTS.

HILL
BT
#8102
ANNOTES

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TAB

B

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Date: JAN 02 2018

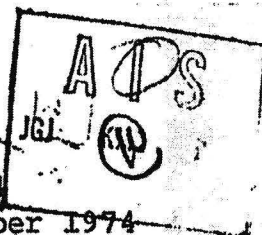


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THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

CM-146-74

13 November 1974



MEMORANDUM FOR THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Subject: US Military Presence in Argentina (U)

1. I have been informed that Ambassador Hill plans further reductions in the official US presence in Buenos Aires from 123 to 96 personnel. He apparently is under strong pressure from the Department of State because of concern over the terrorist threat in Argentina. The Ambassador's plans, arrived at without consultation with General Rosson, Commander in Chief, US Southern Command, call for an additional reduction in the US Military Group from 20 to 13 - a strength at which, in the opinion of General Rosson, the MILGP will be incapable of performing its mission satisfactorily. As you probably know, the present austere MILGP manning level represents a temporary reduction from the authorized strength of 29.
2. While I fully appreciate the seriousness of the terrorist situation in Argentina, I am concerned that these reductions are being made unilaterally, without prior consultation with Department of Defense, and in disregard of the formal mission agreements in effect between the Government of Argentina and the United States. As an illustration of this latter point, I recently received a personal communication from General Hector Luis Fautario, Commanding General of the Argentine Air Force, requesting the re-establishment of two personnel removed from the Air Force Mission as a result of the temporary reduction of US personnel in July 1974. General Rosson advises me that the Chief, US Navy Mission, has received a letter from Rear Admiral Roccatagliata of the Argentine Navy Staff proposing that a US Navy advisor to the Argentine Naval War College be restored.
3. Service in high risk areas is a necessary and accepted aspect of military service. For the United States military to back down in the face of a threat that the Argentine military faces in greater measure casts us in a decidedly unfavorable light. In this regard, I am not persuaded that the terrorist threat will be lessened appreciably by a reduction from 20 to 13 military personnel.

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~~SUBJECT TO GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION~~
~~SCHEDULE OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652~~
~~AUTOMATICALLY DOWNGRADED AT TWO~~
~~YEAR INTERVALS~~
~~DECLASSIFIED ON DECEMBER 31 2000~~

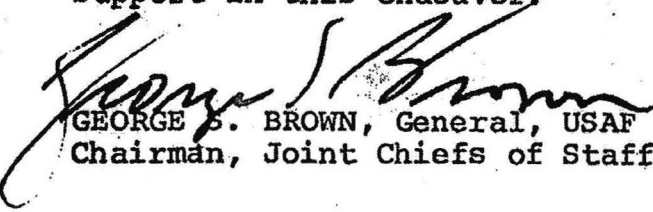
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4. (S) I strongly recommend that every effort be made to forestall further reductions in the current temporary manning level of 20 for the US Military Group in Argentina and request your support in this endeavor.


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

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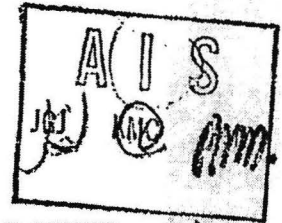
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TAB

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Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS
Date: JAN 02 2018

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

November 26, 1974

*ISA
Review for
action*

Dear Bill:

You will recall that in April of this year, following receipt of intelligence reports that terrorist groups in Argentina were prepared to turn their violent activities against U.S. personnel in our diplomatic mission in Argentina, Ambassador Robert C. Hill recommended as a counter-measure that significant personnel reductions be undertaken in all elements of his mission. In the course of the ensuing several months, approximately 65 positions were reduced by transfer, direct curtailment of tours of duty, and by not filling certain vacancies as they occurred.

Since April, the incidence of murder, bombing and other terrorist acts in Argentina has escalated steadily. While it has been some consolation that such violence has not been directed at U.S. mission personnel since the attack on a USIA officer in Cordoba early this year, it has been apparent that the threat hung in delicate balance and that attacks might be directed against the U.S. mission in some form at any time.

On October 24, in Buenos Aires telegram No. 7865, the Embassy reported that the Chief of the Argentina Federal Police, Alberto Villar, called in the U.S. Security Officer to apprise him of information that had been obtained from an Argentine terrorist. Villar

The Honorable
William P. Clements, Jr.,
Deputy Secretary of Defense.

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SEC DEF CONTR No. X-250.6
I-26375/78/11/158A

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Date: JAN 02 2018

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stated that the informant indicated terrorists were now prepared to mount attacks against women and children and that there were indications that such attacks might begin on November 1. Also, of considerable significance in the Police Chief's briefing was the informant's report that two members of the U.S. military group had been carefully tracked and, indeed, had been marked for assassination. Allegedly, only a last-minute change of plans in the movements of the two individuals aborted the assassination attempt. The gravity and validity of Villar's information was starkly underscored on November 1 when Villar himself and his wife were killed by a powerful explosive device placed aboard his private boat. In Buenos Aires telegram 8761 of November 8, the detailed transcript of the Federal Police interview of the informant, which Police Chief Villar had described to our Security Officer earlier, was transmitted to Washington, detailing, among other things, the plans to kill the two military advisers who were identified by name. [REDACTED] information [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] indicating that a weekend meeting between leaders of two terrorist groups was to be held in Argentina on November 9 and 10, and that one of the terrorist groups planned to recommend terrorist action against the United States Embassy and its personnel in Buenos Aires, including assassinations, abductions, and damage to the U.S. Embassy. Most recently [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] it was reported that at the weekend meeting mentioned in the earlier report, the terrorist groups agreed to begin actions in December 1974, to include assassination attempts against U.S. Embassy personnel.

Ambassador Hill is currently in Washington and, after extensive consultation with him and taking into account the most recent reports cited, the Department of State has concluded that action should

CIA E.O. 13526 Section 3.3(b)(1)

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be undertaken promptly to carry out the second-stage reductions the Ambassador has recommended. These reductions were carefully programmed by the Ambassador with the members of his country team. The Ambassador and his advisers are confident that despite some diminution in less essential functions, the vital work of the mission elements can be carried out by the smaller staff which would remain.

Specifically, with reference to the Department of Defense, the reduction of the U.S. military group from 20 to 13 would, in the opinion of the MILGRP commander, permit him to retain effective representation of the U.S. Army, Navy and Air interests. With respect to the Defense Attache Office, in declaring his willingness to have the Air Attache's aircraft deployed elsewhere with its four crew and support personnel, Ambassador Hill, as indicated in his telegram, does not foreclose the possibility that at such time as the general terrorist situation improves, the assignment of the Beech King aircraft now scheduled for deployment to Buenos Aires in July 1975, might be reinstated.

In view of the foregoing and taking into account the need to move promptly in the face of an apparent growing threat, I would appreciate your concurrence in an instruction to the Embassy in Buenos Aires, approving the proposed reduction of the MILGRP from 20 to 13 and the DAO from 11 to 7 so that implementing action may be initiated promptly.

Very best regards.

Sincerely,



Robert S. Ingersoll
Acting Secretary

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

9 DEC 1974

Mr. Robert S. Ingersoll
Deputy Secretary of State
Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

DECLASSIFIED IN FULL
Authority: EO 13526
Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS
Date: JAN 02 2018

Dear Bob,

I-26375/74
Thank you for your letter of 26 November regarding additional proposed reductions in DoD personnel assigned in Argentina. As you indicate, these proposed reductions would follow significant reductions made in July 1974 during which manning in the U.S. Military Group, Argentina, was reduced from 29 to 20 U.S. military personnel. These earlier reductions were accepted by the Department of Defense as temporary in nature, and the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, and I took the position that subsequent reductions in Argentina would not be considered until a new security assessment had been accomplished, until the first reduction had been fully assessed, and until the problem of sanctions in Section 620(a)(3), Foreign Assistance Act, had been resolved.

The Ambassador's present plan was arrived at without consultation with USCINCSO or with the Argentine Armed Forces as foreseen in formal agreements between the two governments. Further, we strongly believe the proposed reduced manning levels of the U.S. Military Group from 20 to 13, and a reduction from 11 to 7 in the Defense Attache Office, are insufficient to accomplish properly the DoD mission in Argentina.

We fully appreciate the seriousness of the terrorist situation in Argentina. However, we are concerned that these reductions are being decided unilaterally and without regard to the formal Mission agreements in effect between the U.S. and Argentina. The U.S. military accepts assignments in high risk areas as a necessary aspect of military service. It would cast us in an unfavorable light if we were to back down in the face of a threat which Argentine military personnel face to a much greater measure and which will still be faced by the dependent women and children of the Embassy staff.

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~~TO BE RELEASED UPON REQUEST OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE~~
~~OR THE SECRETARY OF STATE~~
~~OR THE SECRETARY OF AGENCIES~~

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I-26601/74

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(S) Considering the above factors and assuming that the terrorist activity poses a threat as indicated by the Ambassador, it would appear that the removal of dependents from Argentina should be considered before making further reductions of official U.S. personnel.

(S) Ambassador Hill called on me on 20 November and presented his case for the reductions he recommended. I remained unconvinced that additional military reductions were necessary at this time and informed the Ambassador that this was still my own as well as the JCS position. In our view, the security situation while bad does not warrant further withdrawal of U.S. military personnel. Our recommendation at this time is to withdraw all dependents immediately and keep any further reduction of military personnel under advisement.

Sincerely,

H. P. Clement

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TAB
E

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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

NATIONAL MILITARY COMMAND CENTER

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ACTION J5(02)

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INFO RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASH DC //ISA-IA//

RUEBDA/COMUSMILGP BUENOS AIRES ARGENTINA

BT

SUBJ: USMILGP PRESENCE IN ARGENTINA (U)

A. SECDEF 011017Z MAY 74 (NOTAL)

B. MY 041445Z MAY 74

C. MILGP ARG 081230Z MAY 74 (NOTAL)

D. SECDEF 141300Z MAY 74 (NOTAL)

E. MILGP ARG 231430Z MAY 74 (NOTAL)

F. MY 232210Z MAY 74

G. MILGP ARG 312100Z MAY 74 (NOTAL)

H. MY 032250Z JUN 74

I. SECDEF 112005Z JUN 74

J. MY 132145Z JUN 74 (NOTAL)

K. MY 151540Z AUG 74

L. SECDEF 161507Z AUG 74

M. MILGP ARG 301600Z SEP 74

N. MY 131615Z NOV 74

1. IT HAS COME TO OUR ATTENTION THAT PREVIOUS EFFORTS TO REDUCE THE SIZE OF MILGP ARGENTINA (REFS A AND D) MAY BE RENEWED AS AN OUTGROWTH OF THE TRAGIC KIDNAP-MURDER OF HONORARY CONSUL EGAN.

2. WITH RESPECT TO THIS POSSIBILITY, WE DESIRE TO REAFFIRM OUR POSITION AS STATED IN REFS B, F, H, J, K, AND N. AN INCREMENTAL REDUCTION IN THE ALREADY TRUNCATED STRENGTH OF THE MILGP WOULD INFLUENCE NEITHER THE TERRORISTS' ABILITY TO STRIKE ANY SELECTED TARGET NOR THE SAFETY OF REMAINING PERSONNEL. RATHER, IT WOULD PROVIDE ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF OVERREACTION, PORTRAY THE UNITED STATES MILITARY AS CUTTING AND RUNNING AND FURTHER DIMINISH THE EFFECTIVENESS

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E

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

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OF THE MILGP. ACCORDINGLY, CINCSO RECOMMENDS STRONGLY THAT PRESENT
MILGP MANNING BE RETAINED, AND THAT RESTORATION OF THE AUTHORIZED
MANNING LEVEL OF 29 BE ACCOMPLISHED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

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Ingersoll Letter

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

March 13, 1975

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.

SEC DEF CONTR No. X-0784-1
F-21496/75

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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