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

#4-36

JCSM-271-75
23 June 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

DECLASSIFIED IN FULL
Authority: EO 13526
Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS
Date: SEP 01 2017

Subject: US Military Group-Argentina (U)

1. (U) The US Ambassador to Argentina recently informed the Argentine Minister of Defense that the United States would reduce its military group's assigned strength from 20 to 13 to reduce US personnel exposure to terrorist activity. This reduction follows a previous drawdown from 29 to 20, which occurred in July 1974 for the same security reasons, and would be effected shortly after the COMUSMILGP was downgraded from a general officer to a colonel in order to comply with Public Law 94-11.

2. (U) The Argentine Air Force Commander and the Argentine Navy Deputy Commander for Policy and Strategy have taken serious exception to these reductions. (The newly appointed Argentine Army Commander's position is unknown.) The Argentine Air Force Commanding General has stated that he will be compelled to ask for total withdrawal of the US Air Force Mission if the current reduction is implemented. The currently authorized MILGP strength of 27 is based upon mission requirements, which have not changed. The "temporary" reduction to 20 personnel reduced mission capability significantly, particularly in the opinion of the Argentine military. To reduce MILGP strength to less than 50 percent of authorized strength degrades mission effectiveness to an unsatisfactory level. Furthermore, at a time when the Argentine military is growing more suspicious of Brazil's aspirations for greater military power, both conventional and nuclear, the contrast between the US military manning level in Brazil (40--with three general officers) and the reduction to 13 in Argentina may cause the Argentines to draw erroneous conclusions about overall US policy toward the two countries.

Office of the Secretary of Defense
Chief, RDD, ESD, WHS
Date: 01 Sep 2017 Authority: EO 13526
Declassify: X Deny in Full: _____
Declassify in Part: _____
Reason: _____
MDR: 17 -M- 1335

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~~Classified by: Director, D-3~~
~~SUBJECT: US MILITARY GROUP-ARGENTINA~~
~~CONTROL OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652~~
~~WHICH IS A SECRET DOCUMENT AT THE~~
~~TIME INTERVAL~~
~~DECLASSIFIED ON DECEMBER 31, 1993~~

Argentina 0001

23 Jun 75

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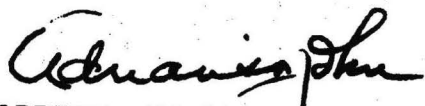
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Date: SEP 01 2017

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3. (A) Duty in high-risk areas is a necessary and accepted condition of military service. While the seriousness of the security situation is appreciated, reducing military personnel from 20 to 13 will not markedly reduce the terrorist threat. It is useful to compare US actions in Guatemala following the murder of the MILGP commander and in Iran following the recent murder of two US personnel to US actions in Argentina. In both Guatemala and Iran, US MAAG personnel carried out their missions in the wake of actual political assassination of MAAG personnel. There were no personnel reductions as a result of those incidents. It should also be noted that reductions in US Embassy personnel in Argentina have not been of the same order of magnitude as those proposed for the MILGP, nor has the Ambassador found it necessary to curtail the assignment of dependents of remaining US military and civilian personnel.
4. (A) The Joint Chiefs of Staff are concerned that the US MILGP reductions will be perceived as a weakening of US resolve in the face of a threat. It could also erode good Service-to-Service relationships that have been valuable to the United States and that may be even more useful should the Argentine Armed Forces once again become more actively involved in governing the nation. Under these circumstances, the Joint Chiefs of Staff believe that it would be a serious mistake to carry out further reductions and that the US MILGP should be returned to its currently authorized military strength of 27.
5. (U) The Joint Chiefs of Staff request your support to preclude further erosion in US military presence in Argentina and to gain authorization for an early return to the authorized strength.
6. (U) The Joint Chiefs of Staff recommend that a memorandum, substantially like that contained in the Appendix, be forwarded to the Secretary of State.

For the Joint Chiefs of Staff:

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Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS
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ADRIAN ST JOHN
Major General, USA
Vice Director
Joint Staff

Attachment

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APPENDIX

DRAFT

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF STATE

Subject: US Military Group-Argentina (U)

1. (S) As you know, US presence in Argentina was substantially reduced last year in an attempt to reduce the threat by terrorist groups to the security of US officials. As a part of this effort, the number of military personnel assigned to the US MILGP was temporarily reduced from 29 to 20 in July 1974. Additionally, in April 1975, COMUSMILGP, Argentina, was downgraded from a general officer to a colonel in order to comply with Public Law 94-11. Recently, at the urging of the US Ambassador, a further reduction of US MILGP personnel, from 20 to 13, was directed. However, I have reevaluated the situation in light of current developments and firmly believe that reduction of the US MILGP to 13 will be counterproductive to US interests in Argentina and will damage our ongoing efforts to renew confidence in US resolve around the world. In addition, the currently authorized MILGP strength of 27 is based upon mission requirements, which have not changed. The "temporary" reduction to 20 personnel reduced mission capability significantly, particularly in the opinion of the Argentine military. To reduce MILGP strength to less than 50 percent of authorized strength unquestionably degrades mission effectiveness to an unsatisfactory level. Furthermore, at a time when the Argentine military is growing more suspicious of Brazil's aspirations for greater military power, both conventional and nuclear, the contrast between the US military manning level in Brazil (40--including three general officers) and the reduction to 13 (with no general officer) in Argentina may cause the Argentines to draw erroneous conclusions about overall US policy toward the two countries.

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SUBJ: US MILGP, ARGENTINA
AUTHORITY: EO 13526
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2. (S) The Argentine Minister of Defense has demonstrated 1
acceptance and understanding of the additional reduction in US 2
military presence in Argentina. However, this attitude is not 3
shared by other key Argentine military leaders. The Commanding 4
General of the Argentine Air Force, General Fautario, who had 5
previously submitted a formal request for the restoration of the 6
vacant positions, has stated that this latest reduction would 7
compel him to request the withdrawal of the US Air Force Mission. 8
General Fautario cites the bilateral mission agreement between the 9
United States and Argentina, which this unilateral reduction 10
clearly violates. Articles 5 and 7 of the US-Argentina Mission 11
Agreement require that any variation in personnel strength in 12
the Mission must be "mutually agreed upon between the Department 13
of Air Force and the Ministry of Aeronautics." (It should be 14
remembered that General Fautario led the effort to retain the 15
US MILGP last year when the former Army commander had called 16
for its expulsion.) We would also anticipate negative 17
reactions to further reductions by the commanders of the 18
Argentine Army and Navy. 19

3. (S) Therefore, I must conclude that the withdrawal of seven 20
additional US military members from Argentina at this time 21
would not serve the best interests of the United States. It is 22
in violation of our mission agreements with Argentina and 23
clearly places the continued presence of the US MILGP in 24
jeopardy at a time when Argentina's internal security situation 25

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and US interests warrant a continued US military presence.
Furthermore, I believe we should consider filling the
currently authorized 27 spaces in the near future. I would
appreciate your assistance in reversing the reduction action
now in progress and effecting a return to authorized manning
levels.

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