

DIADIN 1225-75
21 MAY 1975

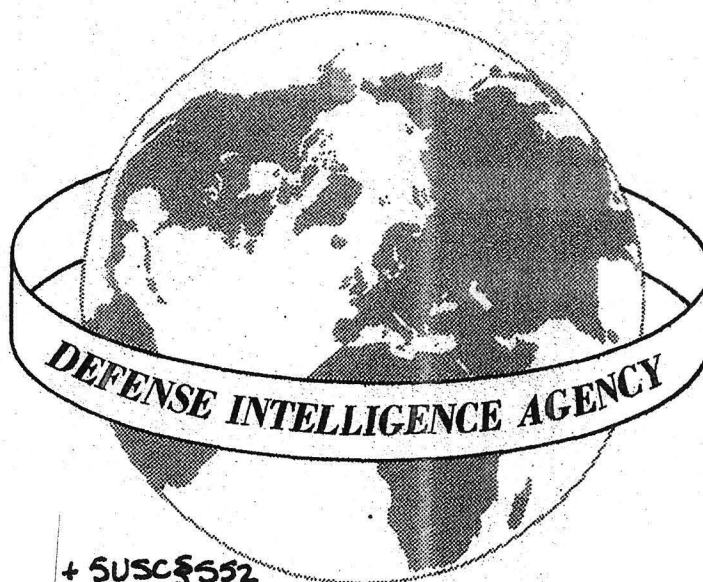
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Office of the Secretary of Defense
Chief, RDD, ESD, WHS

Date: 29 MAR 2018 Authority: EO 13526

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ARGENTINA

GOVERNMENTAL CRISIS.

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~~(C/NFD)~~ President Peron may be facing the gravest crisis of her 10-month Presidency as a result of a dispute between newly appointed Army Commander Maj Gen Alberto Numa Laplane and Minister of Defense Mario Savino. The army, which has become increasingly unhappy with the political maneuverings of Social Welfare Minister and de facto President Jose Lopez Rega, could conceivably intervene politically and end Argentina's two-year experience with constitutional government.

~~(C/NFD)~~ The dispute centers on Savino's 20 May order to Laplane to retire two brigadier generals who are anathema to Lopez Rega. The pro-Peronist Laplane refused to do so and presented his resignation to the President. Because of his ties to Lopez Rega, it had been feared by many army officers that he would be a puppet of the Welfare Minister. His defiance of Savino and Lopez Rega will now be taken as a sign that Laplane's basic loyalties rest with the military.

~~(C/NFD)~~ In recent weeks, the army has become increasingly alarmed by the machinations of Lopez Rega and is pondering the means to assert itself politically once more. A lack of consensus on what form the intervention should take has inhibited any definite plan of action from evolving. However, the abrupt dismissal of Lt Gen Leandro Anaya as army commander last week and the events of 20 May may have pushed the army too far. Historically, threats against the military as an institution have caused the army to move politically, and Lopez Rega's power plays will doubtless be perceived as such a threat.

~~(C/NFD)~~ Should President Peron refuse Laplane's resignation and instead fire the Minister of Defense,

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she may delay the seemingly inevitable confrontation with the army. However, if she accepts the resignation, opposition to the government may crystallize within the military. The army could probably count on the support of the Radical Civic Union and key labor leaders opposed to the autocratic turn the government has taken.

~~(C/NID)~~ If the military does decide to act, it would probably attempt to avoid an outright coup. Ideally, military leaders would want President Peron to remain in the presidency but without Lopez Rega. Should the President resign, a military-civilian junta would probably be formed. The generals are still mindful of the unpopularity of the last military government and would wish company to shoulder the blame. ~~(SBS 31 Dec 81)~~

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