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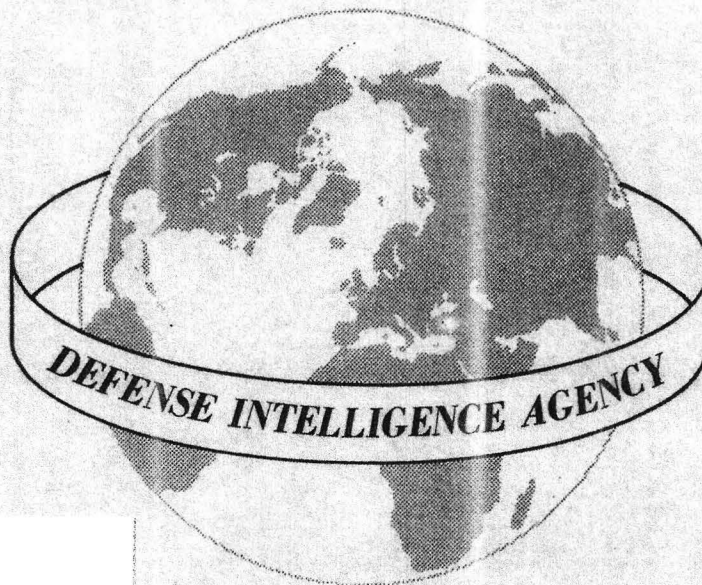
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DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE NOTICE



Argentina 0001

Office of the Secretary of Defense
Chief, RDD, ESD, WHS
Date: 19 JAN 2018 Authority: EO 13526
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5 U.S.C. § 552

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ARGENTINA

PRESIDENT LUDER STRENGTHENS POSITION.

~~(S/NPD)~~ Interim President Luder's appointment of Dr. Manuel Arauz Castex as Foreign Minister on 2 October increases speculation that Mrs. Peron's return to office may be delayed.

~~(S/NPD)~~ Dr. Arauz Castex is a political unknown but has an impressive legal background including previous service as a Supreme Court judge. He probably owes his appointment to his long-time personal relationship with Luder.

~~(S/NPD)~~ Last month, Luder indicated that he would head more than a caretaker government when he named close friends to the Cabinet as Defense and Interior Ministers only two days after Mrs. Peron began a leave of absence. Although press reports have stated recently that Mrs. Peron would return to office on 17 October -- Peronist Loyalty Day -- there apparently is mounting pressure within the government, military, and Peronist Movement for her to extend her absence. Some profess that such a delay would give Luder more time to initiate policies, which Mrs. Peron was unsuccessful in doing, to deal with the country's economic deterioration and terrorism.

~~(S/NPD)~~ Luder's entrenchment in office is also indicated by press reports that he has ordered the creation of a Defense Council to organize a campaign to counter subversion. The council will reportedly be under the direct leadership of Luder with his Defense Minister and armed forces commanders as primary members. This act, as well as Luder's well-received recent appointment of the capable Cafiero as Economy Minister, indicates that he has wasted little time in attempting to correct the country's two greatest problems -- the economy and terrorism.

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(S//NF) Meanwhile, the leader of the Radical Civic Union (UCR), the second most significant political party, has asked Luder to set forward the 1977 presidential election to November of next year -- six months early. Although the request is undoubtedly based on UCR's belief that early elections would provide the party with an excellent chance of winning, there is a good deal of sentiment also within Peronist ranks for early balloting. The UCR leader and others justify the holding of early elections based on their belief that given a political vacuum, economic problems, and uncontrolled terrorism, chances of the government getting through constitutionally to 1977 are not good.

(S//NF) In any event, a government actively directed by Mrs. Peron could probably not endure until the 1977 elections without military intervention. The only alternative at the moment is for Mrs. Peron to return to the presidency as a figurehead, with her Economy and Interior Ministers exercising the real reigns of power for her.

(S//NF) 31 Dec 81

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