

DEP. SEC. HAS SEEN
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

#4-60

25 March 1975

Memo For Mr. Clements

Handwritten initials and a circled 'AIS' in a box.

Attached is a brief chronology FYI of recent developments re: US military presence in Argentina.

The latest step was Mr. Ingersoll's letter to Secretary Schlesinger (Tab C) stating that -- despite certain DoD objections -- the MILGRP must be reduced by 7.

No action is required by you at this time, unless you choose to become involved (which I presume you don't).

Page determined to be Unclassified
Reviewed Chief, RDD, WHS
IAW EO 13526, Section 3.5
Date: DEC 28 2017

Handwritten signature
PMD

Office of the Secretary of Defense 5 U.S.C. § 552
Chief, RDD, ESD, WHS +
Date: 28 DEC 2017 Authority: EO 13526
Declassify: Deny in Full: _____
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Reason: _____
MDR: 17 -M- 2197

Attachment
a/s

Handwritten notes at the bottom of the page: Cy rfn to ISA 31 Mar 75 I 103158

O: DSD (Dawkins)

ISA (24 Nov 75)

~~X - Argentina 0913~~

~~X - Argentina 3202~~

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Date: DEC 28 2017

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INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

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DEP. SEC. HAS SEEN

OFFICE OF ~~DECLASSIFIED~~ ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
Authority EO 12958
Authority EO 12958

06 MAY 1999

24 March 1975

Chief, Declass Br
Dk & Rec. Div. WMC

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Authority: EO 13526
Chief, Records & Declass Div, WMS
Date: DEC 28 2017

MEMORANDUM FOR LTC DAWKINS

SUBJECT: Current Status of Request for Reduction of Argentina
MilGroup

To confirm our conversation of this morning:

- In early March Ambassador Hill (U.S. Ambassador to Argentina) again raised the issue of a reduction of the MilGroup in Argentina, prompted by the terrorist assassination of a U.S. Consular Agent (Egan). The position reiterated all of his previous arguments (initial request was made in Nov 1974).

-- Acting Secretary of State Ingersoll forwarded a letter to SecDef on 13 March supporting this reduction and indicating that he would call the SecDef shortly thereafter to discuss the issue.

agreed

-- The point paper at Tab A was prepared by ISA for SecDef's use in his conversation with Ingersoll. It essentially recommended that we fall off our previous position and agree to a reduction in the MilGroup.

-- The CJCS also provided an input to the SecDef (memo at Tab B) reiterating his firm position that no reduction in the MilGroup be made.

- In view of conflicting inputs from ISA and the CJCS, Gen Wickham, Mil Asst to SecDef, contacted Mr. Eagleburger in the State Department to discuss the issue. In summary, Gen Wickham was advised that State intended to overrule any DoD recommendation to keep the MilGroup strength at its current level and would support the Ambassador's request for reduction. Gen Wickham asked Mr. Eagleburger to provide written confirmation which he agreed to do; [to date this has not been forthcoming.]

At the present time no further actions are being taken pending official notification from State.

Attachment
a/s

C

Perry F. DUBOSE
PERRYMAN F. DUBOSE
LTC USA
ASST EXEC OFFICER



Argentina 0001

RECEIVED
TODAY
(Tab C)
25 MAR 75

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Dear Jim:

Subsequent to my letter to you of March 13 relating to the proposed temporary reduction in DOD official personnel in Argentina, we gave very careful consideration to a compromise suggested by DOD whereby ~~██████████~~ would be reduced from 11 to 7 but the MILGRP remain at 20. We concluded, however, that Ambassador Hill's argumentation is overriding, and that the MILGRP must be reduced from 20 to 11. I conveyed this to Bob Ellsworth by phone on March 18.

We will be seeking separately DOD clearance on an instruction to Ambassador Hill to call on the Minister of Defense to explain the MILGRP reduction prior to its implementation. In the meantime, I ~~would~~ appreciate your cooperation in arranging to take the attache aircraft out of Argentina and reducing the DAO complement to 7.

Very best regards.

Sincerely,

Robert S. Ingersoll

Robert S. Ingersoll
Acting Secretary

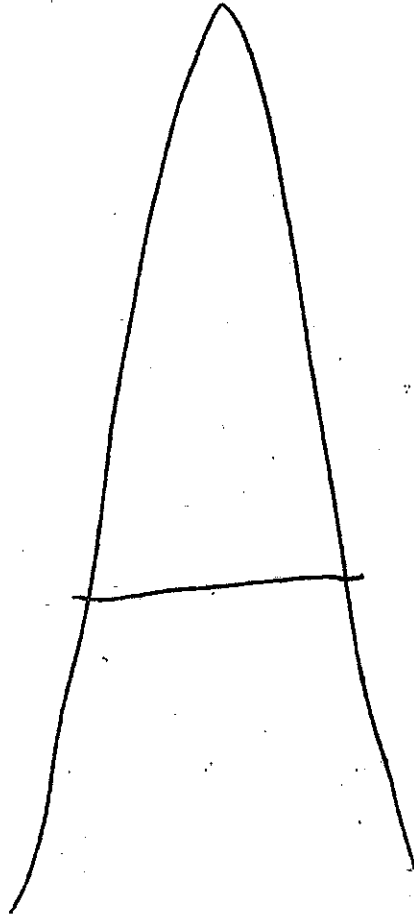
The Honorable
James R. Schlesinger,
Secretary of Defense.

ARA/APU:RCFelder:jc
3/19/75

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DIA FOIA 5 U.S.C. § 552 (b)(3); 16 U.S.C. § 424

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14 MAR 1975

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Date: DEC 28 2017

MEMORANDUM FOR THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE (ISA)

SUBJECT: Proposed Reduction in MilGroup Argentina

On 13 March 1975, the Acting Secretary of State forwarded a letter to the Secretary of Defense proposing a reduction in the US Military Group Argentina from 20 to 13 US personnel.

This issue had been the subject of earlier correspondence (November 1974), however, Dep Sec Def did not concur with the reduction of the MilGroup.

Acting Secretary Ingersoll's letter makes the following facts: (1) Ambassador Hill has made the present terrorist situation his rationale for requesting a reduction in official US presence, (2) his point is reinforced by the recent slaying of the US Consular Agent, (3) the possible political implications if a US military officer were involved in an assassination, (4) the temporary nature of the proposed reduction, (5) the apparent urgency of Ambassador Hill's request.

Although we could argue against the proposal to cut US military presence, the possibility of additional terrorist activities and adverse political implications appear to offset arguments to continue the current strength of US military presence in Argentina.

Therefore, I recommend that DOD not object to the proposed reduction and that you forward the attached point paper, indicating this view, to the Secretary of Defense for his use in discussing the matter with Secretary Ingersoll.

JAMES A. GRIMSLEY, JR.
Major General, USA
Director
Security Assistance
Plans and Requirements

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~~06 MAR 1999~~

~~Chief, Declass Div~~
~~Dir & Rec. Div, WHS~~

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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.
 - [REDACTED]
- 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.

DIA FOIA S.U.S.C. § 552(b)(3); 10 U.S.C. § 424

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~~AND FOREIGN INTERESTS, UNCLASSIFIED ON 21 Dec 07~~

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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" [REDACTED]
- He also proposes a reduction in the [REDACTED]

DIA FOIA 5 U.S.C. § 552 (b)(3); 10 U.S.C. § 424

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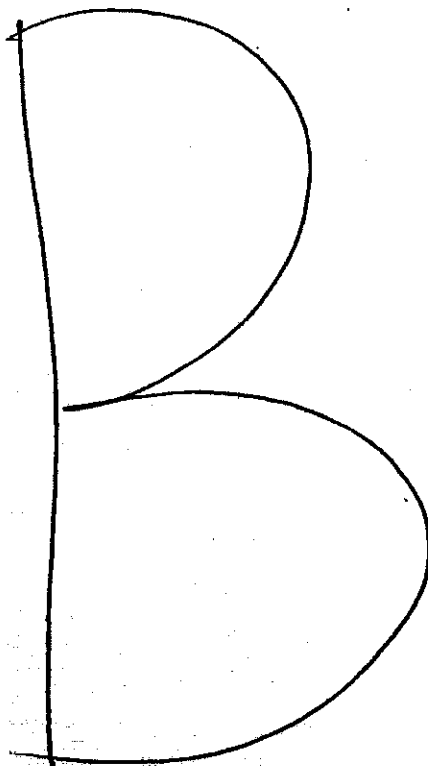
- Since the Ambassador believes that the terrorist situation in Argentina continues to require a diminished official US presence recommend that:

- 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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Pete

AIDS
JGI KAC
[Handwritten initials]

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

CM-307-75
17 March 1975



MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Subj: US Military Presence in Argentina (U)

1. ~~(S)~~ I have reviewed once again the question of US military presence in Argentina, including the recent tragic events in that country and the 13 March letter to you from Acting Secretary Ingersoll. In light of all the facts, my conclusion remains that reduction of US military strength below present levels is unjustified and would render the Group incapable of adequately performing its mission.

2. ~~(S)~~ After reviewing the reasons set forth by the Department of State, both in past efforts to reduce our posture and in Mr. Ingersoll's latest letter, I still find no compelling rationale for a further reduction of US military presence in Argentina.

3. ~~(S)~~ Many of Mr. Ingersoll's conclusions are based upon facts that may well pertain to other parts of our mission in Buenos Aires, but have limited, if any, application to the military. It has not been our interpretation of the messages coming from Argentina that the military have been singled out as being in a "high risk category." Our reading of the reports would indicate the reverse.

[Redacted block]

4. ~~(S)~~ The fact remains that the military is frequently called upon to accept high risk assignments as a necessary aspect of military service. For the United States military to retreat in the face of a terrorist threat would, in my opinion, cause a more serious breach in our military-to-military relations with the Argentines than the disservice done to the Ambassador by one department not reducing its complement proportionately. I continue to question whether the proper response, particularly the response by the US Armed Forces to a terrorist threat, is "to diminish the number of targets. . . ." Likewise, I cannot accept the conjecture that should a kidnapping or assassination of a US military officer or enlisted man in Argentina occur,

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

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~~EXEMPT FROM AUTOMATICALLY DOWNGRADED AT TWO YEAR INTERVALS~~
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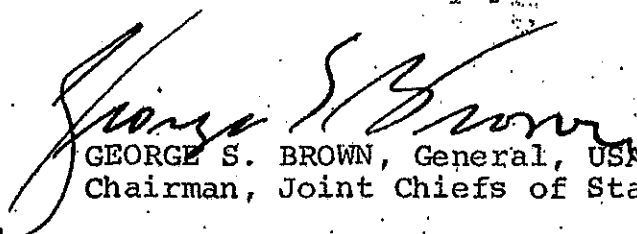
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"it would evolve even greater diplomatic and political complications than a terrorist act against a US civilian because of the possible implications of a US military involvement in Argentina."

5. ~~(S)~~ Finally, while the technique of reducing the number of exposed targets may be useful as a countermeasure to an indiscriminate area threat, such as represented by a rocket attack, this measure is inappropriate for the type of threat posed in Argentina - the kidnapping of specifically targeted individuals.

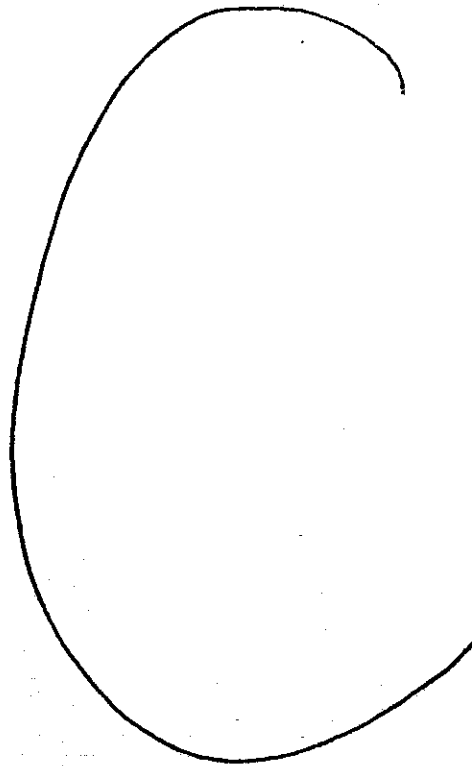
6. ~~(S)~~ In summary, I recommend strongly that we not reduce the current military presence in Argentina.


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

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

March 13, 1975

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Dear Jim:

agree

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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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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-3-

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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