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FROM

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SERIAL: (U) IIR (b)(3):10 USC 424

/***** THIS IS A COMBINED MESSAGE *****/

BODY

(b)(3):10 USC 424

COUNTRY: (U) **ARGENTINA (AR)**.

SUBJ: IIR [] ARGENTINE ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF
EXPRESSES OPTIMISM FOR THE SUCCESS OF ALL-VOLUNTEER
ARMED FORCES (U)

WARNING: (U) THIS IS AN INFORMATION REPORT, NOT
FINALLY EVALUATED INTELLIGENCE. REPORT CLASSIFIED

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- DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

DOI: (U) 940923.

REQS: (U) (b)(3):10 USC 424

SOURCE: (U) (b)(3):10 USC 424;(b)(3):50 USC 3024(i)

SUMMARY: (U) ARGENTINE ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF, LIEUTEN-
ANT GENERAL **MARTIN ANTONIO ((BALZA))**, EXPRESSED SINCERE
OPTIMISM AT THE PROSPECTS FOR THE SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION
OF THE ARGENTINE ARMED FORCES TO AN ALL-VOLUNTEER
SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL ACCESSION NEXT YEAR.

TEXT: 1. (U) AT AN INFORMAL BRIEFING OF FOREIGN
MILITARY ATTACHES RESIDENT IN BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINE
ARMY (ARGARM), CHIEF OF STAFF LIEUTENANT GENERAL (LTG)
MARTIN ANTONIO ((BALZA)) EXPRESSED PROFOUND OPTIMISM AT
THE PROSPECTS FOR THE SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION OF THE
ARGENTINE ARMED FORCES TO AN ALL-VOLUNTEER SYSTEM OF
PERSONNEL ACCESSION. THE BRIEFING, AN UNSTRUCTURED
QUESTION-AND-ANSWER SESSION CHAIRED BY LTG BALZA AND
ATTENDED BY HIS AIDES AND SEVERAL MEMBERS OF THE
GENERAL STAFF, WAS INTENDED TO ANSWER THE ATTACHES'

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QUESTIONS ON THE STATUS OF THE ARGARM, AND IT PROVIDED BALZA A FORUM FOR ADDRESSING INFORMALLY VIRTUALLY ANY QUESTION THE ATTACHES WISHED TO ASK.

2. (U) IN SUPPORT OF HIS OPTIMISM, LTG BALZA CITED SURVEYS OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS AND OF CURRENT CONSCRIPTS IN SELECTED GEOGRAPHIC REGIONS, THE RESULTS OF WHICH INDICATE SURPRISINGLY HIGH PERCENTAGES OF YOUNG ARGENTINES FAVORABLY CONSIDERING VOLUNTEER MILITARY SERVICE. SPECIFICALLY, 30% OF HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS (BOTH MALE AND FEMALE) POLLED IN THE TOWN OF BAHIA BLANCA, BUENOS AIRES PROVINCE, INDICATED THEY WOULD PROBABLY VOLUNTEER FOR MILITARY SERVICE UPON COMPLETION OF HIGH SCHOOL, AND ANOTHER 30% INDICATED THEY WERE NOT SURE. ONLY ABOUT 40% DISMISSED THE OPTION OF VOLUNTARY MILITARY SERVICE. FURTHERMORE, 60% OF CONSCRIPTS CURRENTLY SERVING IN UNSPECIFIED ARMY UNITS LOCATED IN JUNIN, BUENOS AIRES PROVINCE, AND JUNIN, SALTA PROVINCE, INDICATED THEY WOULD PROBABLY REENLIST IN THE ALL-VOLUNTEER ARGARM. (b)(3):10 USC 424

NO SPECIFICS WERE GIVEN AS TO HOW THE SURVEYS WERE CONDUCTED OR BY WHOM, WHAT QUESTIONS WERE ASKED, OR NUMBERS OF PERSONS POLLED).

3. (U) LTG BALZA ADDED THAT HE HAD BEEN CALLING FOR REFORM OF THE ARMED FORCES SINCE THE END OF THE 1982 FALKLANDS/MALVINAS CONFLICT. HE STATED THAT WHILE THE PRESIDENTIAL ORDER TO CONVERT THE ARMED FORCES TO AN ALL-VOLUNTEER SYSTEM BY NEXT YEAR MAY HAVE BEEN A SOMEWHAT SPONTANEOUS DECISION BASED ON POLITICAL FACTORS, THE IDEA WAS NOT COMPLETELY NEW TO THE ARGARM STAFF, WHICH HAD BEEN CONSIDERING SUCH AN OPTION FOR SOME TIME.

4. (U) CONCERNING THE BUDGETARY FEASIBILITY OF THIS MOVE, LTG BALZA INDICATED THAT THE ON-GOING DIALOGUE BETWEEN KEY MEMBERS OF THE MILITARY LEADERSHIP (INCLUDING BALZA) AND THE MINISTERS OF DEFENSE, FINANCE, AND GOVERNMENT IS PERIPHERAL TO THE QUESTION OF THE VIABILITY OF AN ALL-VOLUNTEER FORCE. THE DISCUSSIONS ARE A FUNCTION OF THE PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY OF THE SENIOR MILITARY LEADERSHIP TO PRESENT TO THE CIVILIAN AUTHORITIES THE HIGH COMMAND'S MOST REALISTIC VIEW OF RESOURCES REQUIRED TO EQUIP, TRAIN, SUSTAIN, AND OPERATE THE ARMED FORCES. BALZA

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EMPHASIZED THAT THE MOST IMPORTANT RESOURCE TO THE ARMY IS ITS PERSONNEL. THE CONTROVERSIAL PAY INCREASE FOR THE ARMED FORCES REQUESTED BY THE MILITARY LEADERSHIP IN THE COURSE OF FAITHFUL TO THEIR PRIMARY MISSION OF DEFENDING THE NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY. TO THIS MISSION HE ADDED THE NEW TASK OF FULFILLING THE NATION'S INTERNATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE REALM OF PEACE KEEPING. LTG BALZA STATED THAT THE MILITARY MUST AVOID BECOMING POLICE OR PERFORMING TASKS OUTSIDE THE PARAMETERS OF THE PREVIOUSLY MENTIONED MISSIONS, AS IT IS ONLY THEN THAT THE INTEGRITY OF THE INSTITUTION IS TRULY AT RISK. AS SUCH, HE CONCLUDED, IT IS NOT THE POLITICAL FORCE SEEKING TO CHANGE THE MILITARY INSTITUTION WHICH THREATENS IT; RATHER, IT IS THE MILITARY LEADERSHIP WHICH FAILS TO REMAIN FAITHFUL TO THE PURPOSE OF THE INSTITUTION WHICH CAN BRING ABOUT ITS DESTRUCTION.

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