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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, AR

SUBJECT: FUTURE ROLE OF ARMED FORCES IN ARGENTINA

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1. WE HAVE NOTED INCREASING NUMBER OF REPORTS FROM [] AND DIA SOURCES AS WELL AS THE PRESS THAT ARGENTINE ARMED FORCES ARE PREPARING TAKE MORE DIRECT ACTION IN FACE OF CURRENT CRISIS OF POLITICAL AUTHORITY AND CONTINUING DETERIORATION OF ECONOMIC SITUATION. SOME OF THESE REPORTS INDICATE MILITARY COUP IS NOT ONLY PROBABLE BUT IMMINENT.

2. IN THE PAST WE HAVE TENDED TO DISCOUNT REPORTS OF THIS KIND BECAUSE WE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE ARMED FORCES WERE RELUCTANT TO INTERVENE DIRECTLY IN THE CONSTITUTIONAL PROCESS ESPECIALLY IN THE LIGHT OF THE EXPERIENCE IN THE 1966-73 PERIOD. IN VIEW OF RECENT DEVELOPMENTS, HOWEVER, WE WOULD APPRECIATE EMBASSY'S CURRENT ASSESSMENT OF THE POSSIBILITY OF MORE DIRECT MILITARY INTERVENTION AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR U.S. INTERESTS IN ARGENTINA. INGERSOLL

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