

395. Memorandum From the Acting Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (Watkins) to Secretary of Defense Weinberger¹

JCSM-213-82

Washington, September 22, 1982

SUBJECT

Resumption of Military Exports to Argentina (U)

1. (C) On 30 April 1982, the President imposed military and economic sanctions against Argentina as a result of Argentina's refusal to accept the terms of UN Security Council Resolution 502. With the cessation of hostilities in the South Atlantic and the clear need for the United States to rebuild its relationships within Latin America, it is appropriate now to rescind the suspension of military exports to Argentina. This action would permit the delivery of materiel required by the Argentine forces for operational and safety purposes. It would not impact on the separate, more complex issue of certification and would not directly threaten the UK operations in or near the Falkland Islands.

2. (C) While it is clear that measures were necessary to express the US Government's displeasure over Argentine actions in the Falklands, the measures should not be retained to the detriment of broader US interests. Additionally, for the following reasons, lifting the military sanctions imposed on Argentina is in the interests of the US Government:

a. Economic sanctions, which consisted of the suspension of new Export-Import Bank credits and guarantees and the suspension of Commodity Credit Corporation guarantees, have been lifted.²

¹ Source: Washington National Records Center, OSD Files, FRC 330-84-0003, Argentina (June-Sept) 1982. Confidential. Stamped notations on the first page of another copy of the memorandum indicate that Weinberger saw it on September 23. However, a stamped notation on the first page of another copy of the memorandum indicates that Carlucci saw it on September 24. Both of these copies are ibid.

² See Document 375.

b. The United States would not be alone in resuming military deliveries. France has recently lifted its ban on military exports, and it is probable that Italy and the FRG will soon follow.

c. It would send a positive signal to other Latin American countries indicating that the United States places a high value on its relationships with the region and on the defensive capabilities of regional powers.

d. It would preempt any Soviet initiative in developing a military supply relationship with Argentina.

e. It would enhance US influence with the evolving new Argentine government by providing positive US control over military deliveries.

3. (C) Although US support for Great Britain in the Falklands dispute was in harmony with longstanding US policy opposing the use of force for the resolution of disputes, it is appropriate that the United States take a positive step toward improving bilateral relations with Argentina. Lifting the ban on export of military goods imposed on Argentina over 4 months ago would demonstrate the desire of the United States to return to the close relationship it enjoyed with Argentina prior to the Falklands conflict, while respecting British concerns.

4. (U) The Joint Chiefs of Staff recommend that a memorandum, substantially like that in the Annex,³ be sent to the Secretary of State.

For the Joint Chiefs of Staff:

James D. Watkins
Admiral, USN
Acting Chairman
Joint Chiefs of Staff

³ Attached but not printed. An attached undated correspondence tracking sheet indicates: "Action closed with JCS by Telecon. No written response required since requested SecDef memo to State was obviated by State's lifting of sanctions against Argentina on 24 September."