



**Director of
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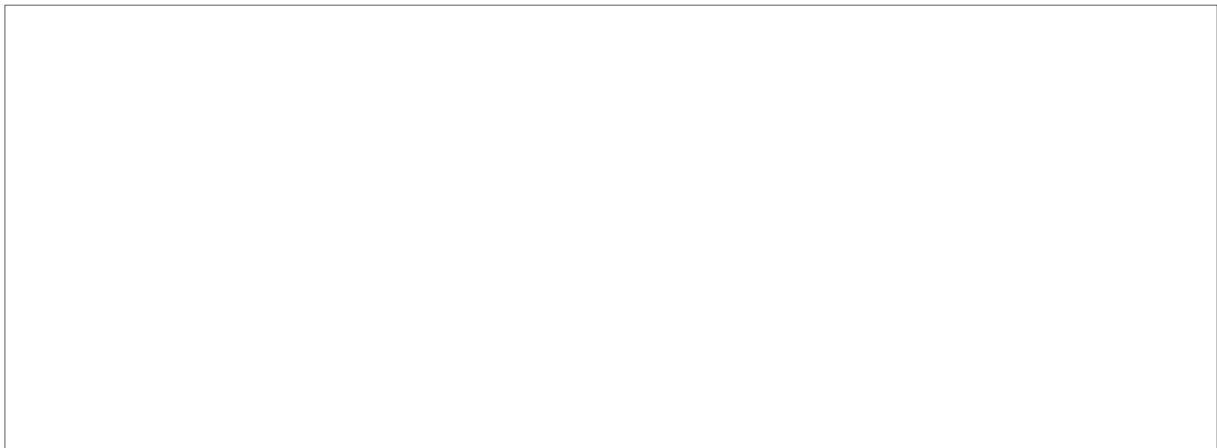
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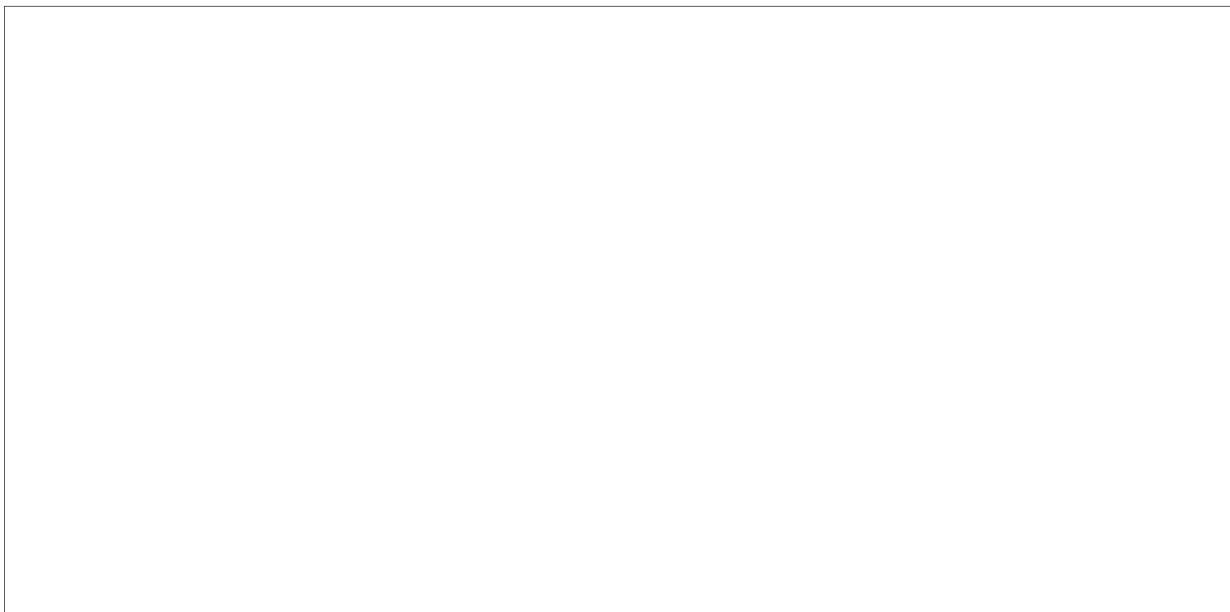
Contents

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Argentina: *Defeat of Hardliners* 7

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3.5(c)

~~Top Secret~~

10 December 1979

Page Denied

Page Denied

Page Denied

Page Denied

Page Denied

Page Denied

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ARGENTINA: Defeat of Hardliners

Recent changes in the Argentine Army hierarchy represent a stunning victory by the moderates--President Videla and Army commander Viola--over military hardliners and appear to clear the way for Viola to succeed Videla as president in March 1981. [redacted]

The most important changes that took place as part of the annual retirement and promotion cycle are the elevation of moderate Viola supporter Major General Galtieri to succeed Viola as Army commander, and the forced retirement of hardline Army Chief of Staff Major General Suarez-Mason. [redacted] 3.5(c)

Suarez-Mason and Major General Menendez--who was sacked for leading a revolt against Viola in late September--were two of the government's principal hardline antagonists. Major General Riveros, a representative to the Inter-American Defense Board, will also be forced into retirement. [redacted] 3.5(c)

Viola's own impending retirement from the military necessitated a number of other changes that will bring Viola loyalists into the Army's top jobs. - Until he becomes president, Viola plans to seek international recognition--which he hopes will confer greater legitimacy on his government--and to lay the groundwork for a return to civilian rule. Continued hardline opposition in the Army leadership would have threatened these plans and might even have prevented Viola's selection as president. [redacted] 3.5(c)

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10 December 1979

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