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S. PIONS AND MILITARY RETALIATIONS AGAINST
ARGENTINA

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Attachment:

D Ops Staff 7/10/2 dated 1 April 1982 (3 pages).

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1 April 1982

D Ops Staff 7/10/2

CAE*M. H. Baker*

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SECCOS

SANCTIONS AND MILITARY RETALIATIONS AGAINST ARGENTINA

1. You asked for a list of possible sanctions and military retaliations against Argentina. An illustrative list is given below. These have not received full staff consideration regarding their feasibility or military implications. The FCO have stated at DOE meeting on 30 Mar that any sanctions would be a matter upon which they would expect to lead.

*11 gts
initial
mym
7/4*2. Low Level Sanctions in UK.

a. Non cooperation with Argentine Attaches. e.g. refuse visits etc.

b. Non cooperation with routine Argentine requests for Defence sales.

c. Refusal of requests for aircraft landing facilities for aircraft.

(1) One Argentine military aircraft due in to Stansted on 5 April. Seventeen aircraft called at Stansted in the last 12 months. Normally they collect Defence sales goods. Usually they give a weeks warning of their request to land.

(2) Two civilian aircraft visit Heathrow each week.

d. Refusal to release spare parts for Defence sales equipment e.g. Argentine has Canberras; two Type 42 Frigates and Lynx helicopters.

e. Refusal to allow Argentine military personnel to train in UK.

f. Refusal to allow Argentine civil shipping to visit British ports. The following ships are here at present.

(1) London. MARFRIO 8000 tons visit 1-7 April to load cargo. This ship is a regular visitor.

(2) Heysham. RIO CORRIENTIES 8400 tons due 4-7 April.

RIO CALCHAQUI 10000 tons due 5-7 April.

g. Stop all trade between Britain and Argentina.

h. Stop all financial credits for Argentina.

3. Medium Level Sanctions.

a. Seize and hold Argentine military and civil aircraft visiting Britain.

b. Seize and hold Argentine civil shipping in British harbours.

c. Expel Argentine Ambassador, his staff, and all other representatives from UK.

d. Seize Argentine financial assets in UK.

4. Major Military Retaliations against Argentina.

a. Naval Blockade.

(1) Surface Blockade of Ports. This action would not be considered militarily practical unless the blockading vessels had adequate air cover. Thus a Task Force with aircraft carrier would be needed.

(2) Sub Surface Blockade of Ports. Air cover would not be necessary however to achieve continuing credibility a submarine would have to damage at least one target.

(3) Both types of blockade would involve a major deployment, and if maintained for a period in excess of a few weeks, would incur significant deployment penalties for the RN. For example the Beira patrol using two patrolling vessels involved six vessels for maintenance etc. In the Argentine case with the supporting base more than 5000 miles away in UK, the number of ships or submarines needed to keep any permanent force on station would be of the order of 3 or 4 to 1.

b. Under Water Mining. Mines can be laid by submarine covertly or overtly. Very few explosives need to be deployed to have considerable effect on an enemy. A submarine can carry up to eight mines depending on the torpedo load. Currently the RN have no surface ships suitable for laying mines off Argentina, although frigates can drop mines using their davits. Clearance of the mines once the period of hostility is over would be a problem. At least two minehunters (with logistic support vessels) would take about three weeks to reach Buenos Aires, and depending on the extent of the minefields it could take weeks rather than days to clear affected areas.

c. Air Attacks. RAF attacks on Argentinian cities or ships in Argentinian waters would have to be launched from Ascension Island. Without air tanker support, because of the distance involved in the approach, the aircraft would have to land on completion of the mission on the South American continent; possibly Monte Video or Santiago. Thus in the likely event of denial of use of airfields in South America, air attacks on Argentine targets are not feasible. Bombing or torpedo attacks could however be carried out on Argentine shipping in the South Atlantic within return range of Ascension Island.

James Lord

J T LORD
Captain RN
for Assistant Chief of the
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1 Apr 82