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6 cc Mr. Jackling

PRIME MINISTER

JIC BUSINESS

The only important paper in this week's Red Book is the piece on the possibility of war between Syria and Israel. The analysis and the conclusions are fair enough. My own feeling is that the present state of dangerous tension will continue for a long time. With Syrian and Israeli forces confronting each other, with Israel having accepted in principle an agreement to withdraw, and with Syria having rejected it, there will be a permanent danger of a sudden flare-up, either by accident or by the design of one side or the other. Only resolution of the present impasse will diminish the risk.

As regards the Belgian report of a possible hit and run raid on Port Stanley by the Argentine Air Force on 25 May, the CIG will put an assessment in the Prime Minister's box this evening. At this morning's meeting, the Assessment Staff had no evidence either for or against the Belgian report. They were, however, inclined to take it a bit seriously: there have recently been one or two reports of plotting of this kind of action in the Air Force, ultimately restrained by the Argentine Navy. The Assessment Staff were, therefore disposed to take this report a bit more seriously than a report of unexpected Naval movements - three frigates and two Polar research ships with helicopters on board - at a time when they would have expected the whole Argentine Navy to have been in port - May 17 is Argentine Navy Day.

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A.D. PARSONS
19 May 1983

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