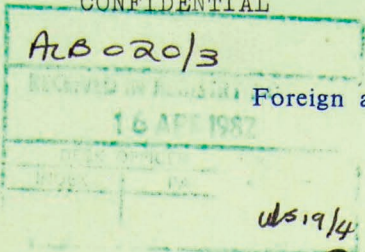


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ARC 020/3



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Edward A. M. M.

London S.W.1

12 April 1982



Mr Macpherson
S. Am. D.

16/19/82
cc Emergency Unit and R.D.
done 16/16/82
Mr Chase J. i.

CALL ON SR RACHE DE ALMEIDA

1. I called on the Brazilian Minister-Counsellor on Wednesday 7 April. He seemed interested in Cuba, and I gave him a potted account of life in Havana. From that I moved on to the Falkland crisis; my first reaction, when I read news of the invasion, was that I had not realised quite how bad things must have been in Argentina. What was the Brazilian position --- bearing in mind that the Falklands/Malvinas problem itself was now in abeyance, having been replaced by a far graver problem, that of armed invasion by one country of another's territory in violation of the UN Charter.

2. Rache de Almeida said that Brazil had historically supported Argentinian claims to the Falkland/Malvinas, but not the use of force. He did not know what the Brazilian attitude would be at the forthcoming OAS meeting. I said I had references to Argentine intentions to invoke the Rio treaty; it would be preposterous for them to invert the purpose of this treaty to justify their aggression.

3. As the Brazilian attitude evinced by Rache de Almeida seemed to be one of keeping their heads down, I warmed up on the Havana angle. I said that Gen. Galtieri might not see himself as an agent of Fidel Castro, but that was precisely his role. The outcome of all this would be to Havana's advantage alone, with primary damage in London and Buenos Aires, and heavy secondary damage in Washington. The effect of the invasion would be to inflame every disputed frontier in Latin America, of which there were plenty. And if the damage in Buenos Aires extended to the fall of the military, the left were waiting for a period of chaos in which they could take over. It would be ironic, and for Argentina's neighbours extremely dangerous, if Castro achieved more through Galtieri than he had managed through Che Guevara.

4. I said that disaster might still be avoided, and even a solution reached to both problems --- aggression and Falklands --- if Galtieri were capable of thinking tactically and not just with his cavalry boots. It was in all our interests for Argentina's friends, and particularly her neighbours, to persuade her to think tactically, and not just to cling onto the rocks.

5. The Dept phoned at this point with business for Brazil to transact as responsible for Argentine interests, so I left without developing parallels between Gen Galtieri and Brigadier Ioannides who launched the Cyprus coup in 1974. Perhaps as well; the geographical proximity factor was reversed in that instance, and Sr Rache may have thought I had crept his flesh crudely enough already. If so, the subsequent positions taken by Moscow and Havana may give him cause for more sober reflection. I read in the papers that the Havana-based Montoneros are eager to return home to join the patriotic fight. Not, I suspect, because they fear the military monopolising a success and consolidating their rule, but rather, in order to be ready in the wings.

cc. Chancery Brasilia

Michael Perceval
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