

32. Article In the National Intelligence Daily Prepared by the Central Intelligence Agency¹

Washington, April 1, 1982

ARGENTINA-UK: Possible Clash

Argentina evidently plans an invasion as early as tomorrow of the disputed Falkland Islands, if its increasingly tough diplomatic posture does not yield results. [handling restriction not declassified]

Buenos Aires has formed an amphibious task force with landing craft, air cover, and communications security. It joins a task force in the area having the country's only aircraft carrier, as well as several destroyers, escorts, and a submarine. *[handling restriction not declassified]*

Argentina's Foreign Minister has stated that it will require British recognition of Argentine sovereignty over the Falkland Island and South Georgia groups and expeditious transfer of them to Buenos

¹Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Office of Support Services (DI), Job 84T00301R: Intelligence Pub Files (1982), Box 2, Folder 1: National Intelligence Daily. Top Secret; *[handling restriction not declassified]*.

Aires. He said, however, there would be no confrontation unless the British try to remove the Argentine nationals from South Georgia. [2 lines not declassified] [handling restriction not declassified]

The UK reportedly has formed a task force in Britain and has alerted naval units in the Caribbean and near Gibraltar, but they will not arrive for 10 days to two weeks. Last Thursday,² however, one or two British nuclear-powered attack submarines evidently deployed toward the South Atlantic and could be in the Falklands this weekend. [handling restriction not declassified]

Comment: The Argentine force could be in position—probably just south of the Falkland Islands—at dawn. The Foreign Minister’s suggestion that Argentina will only respond militarily to direct British action is belied by the amphibious force’s invasion configuration. [handling restriction not declassified]

Britain is aware of a possible invasion and could send reinforcements to the Falklands—a runway capable of handling large transports is available, but refueling would be required. [handling restriction not declassified]

A negotiated settlement is possible, but the Argentines may still be gambling that a third power such as the US will intercede and force some concessions from the UK. London, however, will resist Buenos Aires’s effort to link resolution of the issue of the nationals in South Georgia to discussions of sovereignty. If Argentina does invade, the Thatcher government would have little choice but to respond militarily, or risk a crisis it might not survive. [handling restriction not declassified]

² March 30.