

33. Intelligence Information Cable From the Central Intelligence Agency to Multiple Recipients¹

TDFIR DB-315/06791-82

Washington, April 1, 1982

SUBJECT

Argentine Government Determination To Take Military Action, If Necessary, in the Current Conflict With the UK Over Islands in the South Atlantic (DOI: 31 March, 1 April 1982)

SOURCE

[4 lines not declassified]

1. On the evening of 31 March 1982, Argentine President Leopoldo ((Galtieri)) and the other two members of the ruling military Junta were determined that Argentina will take military action, if necessary, to resolve the current conflict with the United Kingdom over conflicting claims of sovereignty over the South Georgia Islands in the South Atlantic. In meetings late on 31 March, Galtieri and the two other members of the Junta were in firm agreement that Argentina will not back down on this matter.

2. This position was supported by Argentine Foreign Minister Nicanor ((Costa Mendez)). Late on 31 March, Costa Mendez told members of the Junta that the current impasse with the UK is a military problem, not a diplomatic problem; Galtieri forcefully echoed this statement.

3. On the morning of 1 April, there was no change in this position. The Argentine Army and Air Force were ready to provide whatever assistance might be required by the Navy if a decision were made to take military action.

4. On 1 April, the Argentine Navy had information that two Soviet submarines were in the general area of the Malvinas (Falkland) Islands/ South Georgia Islands in the South Atlantic.

5. (Field comment: The source did not state or imply that a decision has been made to take military action in the current dispute. He did not provide any time at which such a decision might be made or such action might be taken.)

[Omitted here is dissemination information.]

¹ Source: Reagan Library, Roger W. Fontaine Files, Falkland Islands [04/01/1982-04/02/1982]. Secret; Wnintel; Noform; Nocontract. Sent to the Department of State (INR), the Joint Chiefs of Staff (DIA), the NMCC at CIA, the National Security Agency, the Departments of the Treasury and Justice, the FBI, and the National Security Council Staff.