

34. Memorandum From Dennis C. Blair of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Clark)<sup>1</sup>

Washington, April 1, 1982

SUBJECT

U.K.-Argentine Dispute in Falkland Islands

In briefing the President this morning,<sup>2</sup> the following points are most important:

—Last night Mrs. Thatcher asked you to call General Galtieri to ask him for an assurance that he will not authorize an invasion of the Falkland Islands;<sup>3</sup>

—An amphibious force, probably carrying 500 troops, is on the way to the Falkland Islands, and is estimated to arrive at 6:00 a.m. on Friday;<sup>4</sup>

—Secretary Haig has instructed our ambassador to tell General Galtieri that any military action would wreck the promising U.S.-Argentina relationship;<sup>5</sup>

The question to decide this morning is whether the President should personally call Galtieri to urge restraint.

*Pros*

—Mrs. Thatcher has asked the President to do so;

—The call might cause Galtieri to think twice about the invasion and call it off or delay it;

*Cons*

—The President runs the risk of becoming a mediator in an intractable dispute which has gone on for years;

—We do not yet have the results of the ambassador's call on Galtieri,<sup>6</sup> so it may not be necessary for the President to intervene personally

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Reagan Library, Executive Secretariat, NSC Country File, Latin America/General, Argentina (01/01/1982-04/02/1982). Top Secret. The date is handwritten. Poin-dexter initialed the top right-hand corner of the memorandum.

<sup>2</sup> Most likely a reference to the President's daily national security briefing. On April 1, Reagan met with Bush, Clark, Gregg, and Meese for the briefing in the Oval Office from 9:30 to 10:10 a.m. (Reagan Library, President's Daily Diary) No other record of the briefing has been found.

<sup>3</sup> See Document 28.

<sup>4</sup> April 2.

<sup>5</sup> See Document 31.

<sup>6</sup> See Document 37.

The question for the longer term is the attitude the United States should take if the Argentinians invade tomorrow, and war breaks out between the two countries.

—We clearly should call for an end to hostilities, and support peace conferences, cease-fires, etc.

—The United Kingdom is both in the right, and a more important and closer ally. In the final analysis, we must support the U.K.

—We should consider initiatives like a personal envoy from the President (a la Habib)<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Reference is to Ambassador Philip C. Habib. Following his retirement from the Foreign Service, Habib served as a special envoy on behalf of the Carter and Reagan administrations, most notably in Lebanon.