

53. **Memorandum From James M. Rentschler, Dennis C. Blair, and Roger Fontaine of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Clark)**¹

Washington, April 2, 1982

SUBJECT

Falklands: What Next?

We believe that it is essential to convene, on an expeditious basis, an SSG whose main objective would be to assess the middle- and longer-term implications of the situation in the South Atlantic and to determine U.S. policy priorities based on the state of play likely to emerge from the current Anglo-Argentine confrontation.

In particular, we need to pose searching questions concerning the desired extent (and duration) of our support for the Brits in these developments; the probable impact which such support might have on larger U.S. strategic interests (NATO commitments); and the degree to which our Hemispheric relationships and policy initiatives (CBI, etc.) will be affected. At a minimum, such a meeting would have a consciousness-raising effect on the national security community and mobilize some assets which have been either deficient or relatively quiescent as current events evolve (defense analysis and logistics, intelligence forecasting, etc.). At a maximum, of course, we would aim for a rational follow-up program to deal with the after-effects of the Falklands issue.

With the above in mind, we have attached an illustrative SSG agenda (Tab A)² which identifies the key questions we need to address over the next few days and weeks (possibly months).

RECOMMENDATION:

That you review and refine the attached agenda and proceed with convening a Falklands SSG.³

¹ Source: Reagan Library, NSC Latin American Affairs Directorate Files, Falklands/Malvinas: NSC & State Memos, 1982. Secret. Sent for action. Blair initialed for Fontaine. Rentschler wrote "Jim" next to his name.

² Attached but not printed.

³ The recommendation was neither approved nor disapproved. No indication of whether a meeting of the SSG was held has been found, although a meeting of the National Security Planning Group (NSPG), held April 5 to discuss [text not declassified] in Central America, briefly touched upon the situation in the Falklands/Malvinas. In the meeting, Haig observed "that the Falkland Islands dispute could complicate the matter as the OAS will be concerned by Argentina's role." (Minutes of a Meeting of the National Security Planning Group, April 5; Reagan Library, Executive Secretariat, NSC National Security Planning Group (NSPG), NSPG 0037 04/05/1982 [Central America])