

100. Telegram From the Central Intelligence Agency to Multiple Recipients¹

Washington, April 12, 1982, 1931Z

196242. TDFIRDB-315/07558-82. Dist: 12 April 1982. Subject: Argentine Government Views of the Current Dispute with the United Kingdom (DOI: 12 April 1982). Source: [*less than 1 line not declassified*].

1. The following are the views of the Argentine Government [*less than 1 line not declassified*].

A. The Argentine Government is gravely concerned about the possibility of war with the United Kingdom and the international political implications of such a war.

B. The latest intelligence indicates that the British fleet is proceeding toward the Falkland Islands; once it arrives, the British fleet is expected to attempt to assault and hold a position, possibly in the South Georgia or Sandwich Islands.

C. The Argentine fleet has been instructed to avoid provoking the British. However, if an Argentine ship is sunk by the British or if a military engagement results in "significant" Argentine casualties, the Argentine Government will discontinue the current talks and will fight the British, regardless of the odds, with the assistance of those countries that prove themselves to be friends of Argentina.

D. The sole winner in a conflict between Argentina and the U.K. would be the Soviet Union; it would gain a toe-hold in the Southern Zone, and with a termination of the current Argentine role in Central America—it would gain a relatively free hand to consolidate its position in Central America and the Caribbean Basin.

E. The Argentine armed forces do not want a close relationship with the Soviet Union. However, in the event of an all-out war with the British, Argentina would be forced to accept help from any nation willing to provide help, including the Soviet Union. The Argentine armed forces have not requested Soviet aid, but the Soviet Union has volunteered to provide assistance to Argentina; such offers of Soviet assistance are not unusual because the Soviet Union usually tries to

¹ Source: Reagan Library, Executive Secretariat, NSC Cable File, Falkland File 04/12/1982 (1). Secret; [*handling restriction not declassified*]. Sent to the National Security Agency, Department of State, Defense Intelligence Agency, Department of the Treasury, Secret Service, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Department of Justice, NPIC, White House Situation Room, National Security Council Staff, CIA Office of Current Operations, JSOC, USCINCSO, and CINCLANT.

turn international disputes to its own advantage. (Field comment: It was not specified whether Argentina has accepted the Soviet offers of assistance.)

F. Many Argentines believe the U.S. Government is helping the British in the current dispute. If this perception should become widespread, there is the possibility of a backlash of Argentine public opinion against the U.S. Government.

G. If the U.S. Government should publicly show any pro-British "tilt" in the current dispute, the Argentine Government will consider the U.S. Government as part of the enemy camp.

2. (*[less than 1 line not declassified]* comment: This is an updated restatement of the positions that the Argentine Government has been filtering into the U.S. Embassy, through a variety of channels, since the current dispute began.)