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YOUR TELNO 172

NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL: FALKLAND ISLANDS

1. YOU MAY DRAW ON THE FOLLOWING. TO SUPPLEMENT MATERIAL SENT BY PEARCE TO SIZELAND IN LAST FRIDAY S BAG. ALMOST ALL LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES HAVE SUPPORTED ARGENTINA'S CLAIM TO SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE FALKLAND ISLANDS, BUT MANY ARE DEEPLY CONCERNED BY HER USE OF FORCE AND HAVE MADE CLEAR THEIR DESIRE FOR A PEACEFUL, NEGOTIATED SOLUTION. MANY GOVERNMENTS ARE UNDER PRESSURE FROM PUBLIC OPINION AND IN SOME CASES FROM THEIR MILITARY TO TAKE A STRONGER PRO-ARGENTINE POSITION. AS THE PROSPECTS FOR HAIG'S PEACE MISSION BECOME MORE UNCERTAIN AND AS THE RISK OF AN ARMED CLASH GROWS THE CHANCE OF A SUCCESSFUL ARGENTINE INVOCATION OF THE RIO TREATY LOOMS LARGER. HOWEVER, EVEN IF ARGENTINA RECEIVES THE NECESSARY 14 VOTES FOR BINDING MEASURES, THE ACTION TAKEN BY PARTIES TO THE TREATY IS CERTAIN TO VARY WIDELY, FROM MERE GESTURES TO ECONOMIC, AND POSSIBLY IN SOME CASE MILITARY, ASSISTANCE. SOME PARTIES WILL RESIST ANY ACTION. THE MAJORITY CAN EXPECT TO BE AFFECTED BY STRONG INTERNAL DISAGREEMENT ON POLICY.

2. AN ENCOURAGING NUMBER OF GOVERNMENTS HAVE SO FAR MANAGED TO MAINTAIN A MORE OR LESS NEUTRAL OR CONCILIATORY POSITION. BRAZIL'S PUBLIC POSITION SUPPORTED THE ARGENTINE CLAIM, BUT SHE CLEARLY DISAPPROVED OF THE ARGENTINE USE OF FORCE AND HAS REMAINED REASONABLY EVENHANDED. INFLUENTIAL ELEMENTS OF THE BRAZILIAN PRESS HAVE HEAVILY CRITICISED ARGENTINA. COLOMBIA BEGAN FROM A NEUTRAL POSITION CALLING ON BOTH SIDES TO AVOID CONFRONTATION AND BLOOD-SHED. IN COOPERATION WITH ECUADOR AND COSTA RICA SHE ATTEMPTED TO PROMOTE A MEDIATION COMMISSION IN THE OAS, WHICH RESULTED IN THE RESTRAINED OAS RESOLUTION OF 13 APRIL WHICH WE HAVE WELCOMED. MEXICO CONDEMNED THE ARGENTINE USE OF FORCE AND EMPHASISED THE MAND-

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ATORY NATURE OF THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION. SHE WISHES TO AVOID ANY RESORT TO THE RIO TREATY AND SAYS SHE WOULD RESIST SANCTIONS AGAINST BRITAIN. THE PARAGUAYAN LEADERSHIP, THEMSELVES WARY OF ARGENTINA, HAVE MAINTAINED A NEUTRAL STANCE, AND CLAIM THAT THIS WILL NOT CHANGE. URUGUAY HAS STRUGGLED TO SUSTAIN A SIMILAR POSITION BUT IS UNDER INCREASING PRESSURE FROM ARGENTINA. NONETHELESS, THE URUGUAYAN PRESIDENT WENT AHEAD WITH A VISIT TO CHILE AND SIGNED A JOINT STATEMENT WITH PRESIDENT PINOCHET ON 14 APRIL, EMPHASISING THE PRINCIPLE OF SELF-DETERMINATION. CHILE OF COURSE HAS A UNIQUELY DELICATE POSITION, AND HAS SO FAR KEPT A VERY LOW PROFILE.

3. THE MIDDLE GROUND IS OCCUPIED BY ECUADOR, PERU AND BOLIVIA. ECUADOREAN STATEMENTS, AIMED PARTLY AT INTERNAL CONSUMPTION, HAVE BEEN STRONG IN DEFENCE OF THE ARGENTINE RIGHT TO REASSERT OLD TERRITORIAL CLAIMS (C.F. ECUADOR'S CLAIM AGAINST PERU), BUT IN THE DIPLOMATIC FIELD ECUADOR HAS COOPERATED WITH COLOMBIA IN PROMOTING THE IDEA OF MEDIATION THROUGH THE OAS. PERU IS TORN BETWEEN A PRO-ARGENTINE MILITARY AND THE MORE RESTRAINED CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT. THE ARMY COMMANDER'S OFFER OF MILITARY HELP TO ARGENTINA WAS REPORTED TO HAVE ENRAGED PRESIDENT BELAUNDE AND THE LATEST PERUVIAN STATEMENT IS CAREFULLY DESIGNED TO BACKTRACK. THE BOLIVIAN MILITARY ALSO ATTEMPTED TO PREEMPT THEIR GOVERNMENT WITH OFFERS OF MILITARY AID, BUT THE GOVERNMENT HAVE SINCE PUBLICLY DENIED ANY INTENTION TO BECOME MILITARILY INVOLVED. EL SALVADOR AND CUBA HAVE ALSO GIVEN THEIR GENERAL SUPPORT TO ARGENTINA.

4. MANY COUNTRIES ARE INFLUENCED BY THEIR OWN TERRITORIAL CONCERNS AND ARE WATCHING THE REACTIONS OF THEIR TRADITIONAL ADVERSARIES CAREFULLY - CHILE AGAINST ARGENTINA: BOLIVIA AGAINST CHILE AND PERU: PERU AGAINST CHILE AND ECUADOR: ECUADOR AGAINST PERU: AND COLOMBIA AGAINST VENEZUELA. SIMILARLY THE STRONGEST SUPPORTERS OF ARGENTINA AND THE MOST LIKELY TO TAKE ANTI-UK MEASURES, ARE THOSE WITH IMMEDIATE TERRITORIAL AMBITIONS - VENEZUELA (GUYANA AND COLOMBIA), GUATEMALA (BELIZE) AND PANAMA (THE CANAL ZONE). VENEZUELA IS THE BEST PLACED TO TAKE DIPLOMATIC AND ECONOMIC MEASURES AGAINST US, THOUGH SHE MUST BE

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CONSIDERING VERY CAREFULLY ANY MILITARY COMMITMENT. THE ARGENTINE AGGRESSION COULD INFLAME TERRITORIAL DISPUTE THROUGHOUT THE REGION WITH FAR REACHING CONSEQUENCES PERHAPS NOT YET FULLY APPRECIATED BY ALL LATIN AMERICANS, FOR THE STABILITY OF THE AREA.

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