

252. Telegram From the Central Intelligence Agency to Multiple Recipients¹

Washington, May 12, 1982, 0210Z

222303/TDFIR-314/00731-82. Dist: 11 May 1982.

Country: Argentina/United Kingdom/USSR/El Salvador.

Subject: Comments of Argentine Government officials on relations with the United States and other countries as a result of the dispute over the Falkland Islands (DOI: Late April—4 May 1982).

Source: [*3½ lines not declassified*].

1. On 27 April 1982, Argentine Army General Alberto Carlos ((Lucena)), Director of the Military Academy, said that President Leopoldo ((Galtieri)) had recently told Army generals that he (Galtieri) felt “cornered” by the pressure being exerted by the U.S. Secretary of State and felt he had to “break out” from under the pressure. Lucena added that it was a well-accepted idea within the army that the U.S. Government wants the Falkland Islands to be independent so the United States can establish a base in the South Atlantic similar to its base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. (Source comment: Lucena did not specify that the comment about the independence of the Falklands had been made by Galtieri.)

2. Between 1 and 3 May, Raul ((Quijano)), Argentine Ambassador to the Organization of American States, said that he expected Argentina to break relations with the United States because of the latter’s announcement on 30 April of its support for the British position in the dispute over the Falkland Islands.

3. On 3 or 4 May, Army Colonel Mario O. ((Davico)), Deputy Chief of the Army Intelligence Service (SIE), said that Galtieri and Foreign Minister Nicanor ((Costa Mendez)) were solely responsible for the fact that diplomatic relations had not been severed with the United States.² Davico said there had been a great deal of pressure for Argentina to break diplomatic relations, but he did not specify the nature or the source of that pressure.

4. Davico said the general opinion within the Argentine Army was that Argentina should accept assistance from the Soviet Union only in

¹ Source: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Haig Papers, Department of State, Day File, May 12, 1982 Falklands. Secret; Noform; Wnintel. Sent to the National Security Agency, the Department of State, the Department of Justice, the White House Situation Room, the NSC Staff, the CIA Office of Current Operations, JSOC, USCINCSO, and CINCLANT. Haig initialed the first page.

² Haig drew a line from the end of this sentence to the right-hand margin next to the paragraph and wrote: “Bull!”

the case of absolute necessity; in such a case, it would be accepted.³ Speaking personally, Davico said he believed that British bombing of the Argentine mainland would constitute a case of “absolute necessity”.

5. Davico said it was unclear what effect the current problem over the Falkland Islands would have on Argentine activities in El Salvador; he said that Argentina had a major political investment in El Salvador, but the Argentine Government might decide to withdraw.⁴

³ Haig wrote in the right-hand margin next to this sentence: “Tell them to do so!”

⁴ Haig wrote in the right-hand margin next to this paragraph: “Tell them again to do so!” A typewritten transcription of this notation next to the handwriting indicates it was made on May 12.