

PS / Sqs



OFFICE OF THE  
DEPUTY CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE STAFF  
(INTELLIGENCE)

1. I attach a copy of my speaking notes on the "Argentine's Capability to defend the Falkland Islands" which formed the basis for my briefing of COS this am. They are contrary to the Immediate Assessment issued by the Chief's Office last night. Sqs may find them of value.
2. I am, of course, ready to elaborate (verbally) should Sqs so wish.

J  
29 3/4.

SECRET

645-25

ARGENTINA

Strengths and Weaknesses

1. The strengths of the Argentinian position are:
  - a. Possession. They hold the Islands; their morale and confidence is riding high.
  - b. Time. They have time to dig-in and carefully prepare their defences, thus reinforcing their grip on the island.
  - c. Short Lines of Communication (Lof C). Their sea L of C are relatively short, ample shipping and a 'window' before they assess the arrival of our first SSN to build-up; probably to a full brigade group with some tanks, artillery and air defences.
  - d. The Garrison. Their occupation force consist of their best and most professional troops.

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2. There are, however, weaknesses in the Argentine Armed Forces, namely:

a. Navy. Their Navy has mainly very elderly ships, and although there are a few modern units, overall it cannot match the RN force which will be deployed. Argentina is especially vulnerable to the SSN and lacks an effective counter.

b. Air Power. Argentine offensive air power, particularly at the ranges it would be forced to operate in the vicinity of the Falklands, is severely limited. The nearest airfield is 420 miles from Port Stanley, the winter is starting with poor weather and the Argentinian aircraft are limited to making visual attacks. Their defence capability over the Falklands is negligible.

Inexperience of Joint Operations. The Argentine Armed Forces rarely work together and lack practical experience of joint operations. Command and control arrangements are likely to be uncoordinated.

Surveillance. The Argentinian's surveillance capability is very limited.

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Argentine Forces

We do not know in final detail the composition of the combined Argentine marine and army force which landed in the Falkland Islands yesterday. Reports indicate that its present size could be some 3000 strong, including troops equipped with light armoured vehicles such as armoured personnel carriers. We believe that units involved come from the 2nd Marine Brigade, 9th Infantry Brigade and 4th Airborne Infantry.

The naval protection group which escorted the landing force probably remained in the area. They include 1 Aircraft Carrier (25 DE MAYO), 4 Destroyers, (including 2 Type 42 Hercules D28 and SANTISIMA TRINIDAD) and possibly 2 Corvettes. To the East, between the Falkland Islands and South Georgia there are two Corvettes (DRUMMOND & GRANVILLE).

The situation on South Georgia is not clear but the last information we have is that 40 Argentine Marines are aboard the Corvette GUERICO off South Georgia with orders to secure GRYTVIKEN and Port LEITH when instructed. The Argentine Survey Ship BAHIA PARAISO which was in the area set sail from GRYTVIKEN at 1630 hours yesterday after spending only an hour and a half off GRYTVIKEN. The GUERICO remains in the area with a maximum of 52 marines aboard.

Further Argentine vessels are at sea including 3 out of their 4 Submarines, their Amphibious Force (including a Landing Ship Dock, an LST and 2 Transports) and 2 Destroyers. Remaining in Argentine Ports are 1 Cruiser (BELGRANO), 1 submarine which is known to be under repair, and 2 Destroyers.

The Argentine Army on the mainland is some 82,000 strong in 11 Brigades. They are equipped with a variety of armoured vehicles including 200 tanks. However half these tanks are of World War II vintage (SHERMAN 4). In addition they have 200 x 155mm guns, and 250 x 105mm guns.

The Argentine Air Force and their Naval Air Arm have some 170 combat aircraft of all types. These include 45 MIRAGE 3 and 5 with 74 old SKYHAWK aircraft (1950s) and 9 CANBERRA bombers. These aircraft are deployed in some 8 airbases on the mainland, generally situated in the North of the country.

Urgent

What can be said  
by 575 on TV at  
10.30am Sunday.

Boy