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IMMEDIATE

UK EYES A

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O P 161225Z APR 82
FM CINCFLEET
TO KODUK NAVY
INFO CTG 317.8
GCHQ
BT

EXCLUSIVE

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SECRET UK EYES ALPHA
SIC AAA/19F/UAJ
OPERATION CORPORATE.
GCHQ FOR K25 AJ27.

EXCLUSIVE

SPARTAN SIGHTING REPORT AT 160000Z APR.

1. ONE LST-TYPE PROB CABO S ANTONIO AND UNIDENT AUX LEFT VICINITY C PEMBROKE ABOUT 151800Z AND MOVED SOUTH 5NM. LST THEN MOVED TO POSN 090 C PEMBOKE 10NM AT 152115Z THEN TO PORT WILLIAM AT 152230Z.
2. UNIDENT AUX LOITERED IN VICY 070 C PEMBROKE 5NM 152030Z THRU 152140Z. VERY FREQ CHANGES IN CO AND SP. THEN PROCEEDED P WILLIAM IN COY LST.
3. ~~CONSIDER MINE-LAYING BY THESE UNITS A POSSIBILITY.~~
4. ~~UNIDENT AUX CHARACTERISTICS.~~ APPROX 3000 TONS, 1 SHAFT 4 BLADES. DIESEL, GEARING WHINE MAST LAYOUT-MAST KINGPOST-HAST. FUNNEL AND S/STRUCTURE RIGHT AFT. RAISED FX. NO LARGE DECK CARGO SEEN. NO NAME SEEN.
5. ONE AUX POSS POLAR SHIP NORTH OF NAVY PT.
6. NO AIR ACTIVITY SEEN.
7. CINCFLEET ASSESSMENT.
 - A. THIS FIRST UPDATE ON CABO SAN ANTONIO SINCE LAST ASSESSED IN P. BELGRANO ON 10 APR.
 - B. UNIDENT AUX CHARACTERISTICS INDICATE POSS MERCHANT OILER UNDER NAVAL CONTROL. SPARTAN'S FIRST SITREP ON 14 APR REPORTED ONE MED AUX (POSS PUNTA MEDANOS) AT LIGHT DISPLACEMENT IN PORT STANLEY AREA. CONSIDER UNIDENT AUX NOT PUNTA MEDANOS (NO FUELLING RIGS REPORTED AND TOO SMALL) HENCE ASSESS PUNTA MEDANOS POSS NOT IN STANLEY AREA AND AS HIGH VALUE SUPPORT UNIT IS MORE LIKELY IN BELGRANO AREA.
 - C. ~~AGREE MINE LAYING POSSIBLE~~
 - D. POSS POLAR SHIP. BAMIN PARAISO IN BELGRANO, IRIZAR ASSESSED EN ROUTE BELGRANO HENCE OPTIONS REDUCED TO VARIETY OF TRANSPORTS/ LARGER TUGS.

DSC (NAVY OPS) ACTION

RUSH DISDO

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IMMEDIATE/PRIORITY 161950Z APR 82

FROM CINCFLT
TO MCDUK NAVY
INFO CTC 317.8
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SECRET

SIC 19F/UJ
GCHQ FOR R25, AJ27
OPERATION CORPORATE

A. CINCFLT 19F/UJ 161225Z APR 82

1. SPARTAN REPORT OF POSSIBLE MINELAYING OFF STANLEY - CINCFLT ASSESSMENT. QUOTE ARGENTINE NORTHWOOD MINING CELL UNQUOTE PRODUCED FOLLOWING MINING PLAN ON 10 APR:

A. AIM. DEFENSIVE MINEFIELD TO PREVENT SSN CLOSE APPROACH TO PORT STANLEY.

B. MINE EXPENDITURE. USED MOST (140 OUT OF 180) OF BUOYANT MINESTOCK PLUS 40 OUT OF 220 GROUND MINES.

C. FIELD POSITION. BUOYANT MINES APPROX ALONG 50FM LINE (5 NM RADIUS FROM C PEMBROKE). GROUND MINES IN APPROX 30FM EITHER SIDE

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ENTRANCE TO PORT WILLIAM CLEAR OF TIDE RIPS AND LEAVING GATE BETWEEN.

D. MINELAYERS. CAPABILITIES TO INCLUDE:

- (1) ACCURATE NAVIGATION
- (2) SUFFICIENT STOWAGE SPACE
- (3) ABILITY TO LAY FROM STOWAGE
- (4) NO HIGHER PRIORITY TASK

PREFERRED ARGENTINE CANDIDATES LST, POLAR SUPPORT SHIP, SUITABLE AUXILIARY.

E. IMPLICATIONS. A MINEFIELD RESTRICTS OWN FORCES AND HAS SERIOUS POLITICAL IMPACT AS A DELIBERATE, PRE-PLANNED AND ESCALATORY STEP.

F. TIMING. KNOWING AN MEZ WAS ABOUT TO BE DECLARED BY UK, THIS WOULD BE THE FIRST PRETEXT FOR LAYING AN UNDECLARED, DEFENSIVE, ANTI-SSN MINEFIELD WITHIN CLAIMED ARGENTINE TERRITORIAL WATERS.

2. EVIDENCE FROM SPARTAN ASSESSED AS FOLLOWS:

A. LST AND AUXILIARY ARE SUITABLE MINELAYERS, THOUGH A GENERAL PURPOSE UNIT PREFERRED TO A TANKER (REF A SUB PARA 7B) FOR SAFETY REASONS AND DERRICKS/STOWAGE SPACE.

B. ROUTE TAKEN COVERED APPROX PREFERRED MINELAYING AREA BUT APPARENTLY BIASED TO SOUTH, POSSIBLY TO COVER MOST LIKELY SSN

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APPROACH TO OBSERVE STANLEY OVER CAUSEWAY. THIS WOULD
 LEAVE GATE TO NORTH.

C. SPEED (ASSESSED 5KT) WAS SUITABLE FOR MINELAYING.

D. VISIBILITY WAS GOOD WHICH IS NEEDED FOR ACCURATE NAVIGATION.

3. CONCLUSIONS. OPTIONS ARE:

A. COINCIDENTAL OTHER ACTIVITY.

B. EXERCISE/SPOOF MINELAY FOR SSN BENEFIT. IF ARGENTINES ASSESS
 UNITS IN STANLEY ARE EFFECTIVELY TRAPPED BY SSN BLOCKADE THEN
 THEY MIGHT CONSIDER:

(1) TRYING TO PROVOKE SSN ATTACK WITH CONSEQUENT DIPLOMATIC
 IMPLICATIONS.

(2) TRYING TO PERSUADE SSN THAT THE AREA COVERED HAS NOW BEEN
 MINED AND HAS TO BE AVOIDED

C. ACTUAL MINELAY.

4. ASSESS OPTION A POSSIBLE BUT UNLIKELY AS NOTHING APPARENTLY
 GAINED WHILST EXPOSING UNITS TO SSN THREAT.

5. OPTION C POSSIBLE BUT SHOULD HAVE BEEN DONE IMMEDIATELY ON
 UK DECLARATION OF MEZ TO HAVE MAXIMUM EFFECT. ALSO ALL
 IMPLICATIONS WOULD NOW APPLY (SUBPARA 1E).

6. HENCE OPTION B FAVOURED BECAUSE IF OBSERVED IT COMBINES

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BENEFITS OF PRACTICE AND EFFECTIVELY DENYING SSN FURTHER
 ACCESS TO THAT AREA ALL WITHOUT NINE EXPENDITURE.

7. IT WILL BE INTERESTING TO SEE IF IT IS REPEATED

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| N | | | | |
| CXM | 1 | DSC (NAVY OPS) | ACTION | (CXU 1 DNOT (DO)) |
| CWP | 1 | ACMS (O) | | |
| CFT | 3 | PATH SUPP GROUP | | |
| CAF | 4 | CCOM | | |
| CWS | 1 | CNS | | |
| CAC | 2 | COMS | | |
| CYC | 1 | DIC | | |
| CUM | 1 | COMS | | |
| CXK | 1 | DSC (ROW) | | |
| CAT | 4 | DST (FMV) | | |

DISTRIBUTION UAJ

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| N | | | | |
| CYG | 2 | BI (NAVY) | ACTION | (CYG 1 DISCO) |
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ARGENTINIAN MINELAYING OPERATIONS - 12 APRIL

2. The two ships sighted by SPARTAN - the CABOT SAN ANTONIO and the possible ISLAS DE LOS ESTADOS - could both have been used as minelayers. They were close to land in clear weather where navigation should have been no problem. The loading of the mines could have been done on the mainland - possibly at Nar del Plata where the MCMVs are based, although we do not know where the Argentinian mine depot is. The movements of the two ships on the days leading up to the 15th are not clear to us. It is just possible that some ground mines could have been flown in to Port Stanley. Buoyant mines in particular are balky before laying (because the sinkers are still attached) and without structural alterations there could have been practical problems in loading them on deck, secured for an open-sea passage, and with space to allow the final pre-lay preparations to be done.

2. The CABOT SAN ANTONIO and the u/I auxiliary were sighted near Cape Pembroke at 151800Z (broad daylight, local time). Their movements were observed until after dark (2230Z). Movements, as they were reported, are shown on the attached map of the area:-

- a. the LST from 1800Z position, moved 5 miles south, then NE to a position 10 miles E of Cape Pembroke then to Port William at 152230Z
- b. the u/I Aux from 1800Z position, moved to an area 5 miles from Cape Pembroke on a bearing of 070°. It loitered there, making almost constant changes of course and speed between 2030Z and 2140Z. The auxiliary returned to Port Stanley with the LST.

DI3(N) Comment

The auxiliary moved slowly, but the speed is uncertain from the report. The LST mostly remained at 3-4 knots. Mines could have been laid at these speeds.

The "constant ~~changes~~ changes of course and speed" as reported for the auxiliary equate less well with minelaying. It complicates the positional accuracy of the field and does not help the laying vessel.

The areas are all within 50 fathoms and thus are suitable for:

- i. buoyant minelaying against surface ships and submarines.
- ii. ground mines inside 20 fathoms against surface ships, and against submarines throughout the area.

Overall, we believe that some mines could have been laid, probably with poor positional accuracy; the preparations before laying may not have led to a high proportion of effective mines. It appeared directed against ships or submarines approaching Port Stanley, rather than against a landing operation on beaches to the south.