

CONFIDENTIAL

E40/11

cc: PS/Mr Onslow
PS/PUS
Mr Wright
Lord Bridges
Falklands Emergency Unit
Mr Ure, Mr Mallaby (Planning Staff)
SAMD,
Research Department
Cabinet Office Assessments Staff (Capt Todd)

Mr Giffard

*M copy also to
PS/Mr Harris
~~PS/Mr [unclear]~~
PS/Lord Bridges
Mr [unclear]*

*Crel
14/4*

DETERMINANTS OF ARGENTINE DECISION MAKING

1. The Argentine Government is non-elected, but has to respond to a complex of pressures to get the necessary backing for its decisions. Since the clumsiness of the mechanisms involved determines the speed of newly thought response, it is worthwhile bearing this in mind when we need to get new thought out of the Argentines. Otherwise we shall simply be fed again the Argentine line previously authorised.

- (a) The President is the servant, not the master of the Junta. Though Galtieri is also a Junta member and simultaneously Army C in C, he does have to refer high decisions to the Junta, meeting as the 'Military Committee'. Behind each of the three service C in C's on the Military Committee there is moreover a kind of senate of senior officers of their particular arm. On major questions (and the Falklands are supremely a major question) the three C in Cs need, formally or informally, to be sure that they have the necessary in-service backing;
- (b) Although the Army holds the Presidency and is very much primus inter pares, each Service has its spheres of primacy. The South Atlantic is a sphere of primacy for the Navy, who have always been most hawkish over the Falklands. On this issue General Galtieri has traditionally been the least hawkish Junta member. He probably still is, partly because the U S connexion is his particular trump card. However there is much inter-service log-rolling;
- (c) The civilians in the Argentine Government are primarily experts but have clout to the extent that they have the ear and confidence of one or more of the three Junta members. The Minister of the Economy (Alemann) and the Deputy Foreign Minister (Ros) have General Galtieri's confidence. The Minister of Foreign Affairs (Costa Mendez) is more a friend and spokesman of the (hawkish) Naval C in C (Admiral Anaya);
- (d) Steps towards a return to democracy, though they have not led to any kind of elections, have already given a voice influential on public opinion to leaders of the political parties. Both the main traditional parties (Radicals and Peronists) are very jingoist over the Falklands issue. Both parties retain considerable influence over organised labour. The military government needs always to ensure that it is not upstaged by the parties and, if it makes concessions, will wish to arrange that party leaders are implicated too.

*1.
cc
Captain Todd
Cabinet Office
Mr M. Thorne ✓
D14, MOD
Mr Flower / PUS
Mr Reed
Mr Penney Res. Dept
return to
me
mre
204.*

[Handwritten signature]

REF: D14/A0

~~SECRET~~

268-269

E40/12

DGI

DCDS(1) (Thru DS Int)

Ex(1) file

Falklands

Copy:

W Col Lowles.

21/52

British Ambassador to Buenos Aires (Ex) - Views.

1. Attached are some papers provided by the FCO Emergency Unit for the Falklands Crisis which are of interest. They cover the advice of Mr Williams, late Ambassador in Buenos Aires, on various aspects of the Falklands Crisis as they affect Argentina. In particular they provide good background on the JUNTA.
2. In addition there is a useful FCO minute on Soviet involvement.

21 April

~~SECRET~~

Edmond Col
AO D14