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ACTION ARA-16

INFO OCT-00 ADS-00 INR-10 EUR-12 SS-10 OIC-02 CIAE-00
H-01 IO-15 NSCE-00 NSAE-00 SSO-00 HA-06 L-03
PM-09 PA-01 INRE-00 SAL-01 ANAE-00 ICAE-00 SP-02
SPRS-02 /090 W

-----214371 222326Z /60

O R 222103Z APR 82
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3353
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION USNATO
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USCINCSO QUARRY HTS PN
USCINCLANT NORFOLK VA
DIA WASHDC JSI-4A/JSI-4B/DB-3E/DB-3B/DC-4A

C.O.N.F.I.D.E.N.T.I.A.L SECTION 1 OF 2 BUENOS AIRES 2450
USCINCSO FOR INTAFF, CINCLANT FOR POLAD.
E.O. 12065: RDS-3 4/22/12 (FRIEDMAN, TB) OR-P
TAGS: PBOR, AR, UK, FA
SUBJ: A CONSIDERED ARGENTINE VIEW OF THE SITUATION

1. ARGENTINE CIVILIAN AND MILITARY LEADERSHIP HAVE NOW HAD TIME TO DIGEST THE MEANING OF THE SOUTH ATLANTIC CRISIS AND ASSESS ITS PROBABLE IMPACT. AN EMBOFF HAD A CONVERSATION APRIL 21 WITH A WELL-INFORMED POLITICIAN WHO HAS SERVED IN AND GENERALLY SUPPORTS THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT. WE BELIEVE HIS COMMENTS REFLECT THE THINKING OF THE KEY CONSERVATIVE CIVILIAN ELEMENTS WHO HAVE COOPERATED WITH THE MILITARY SINCE 1976.

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IN THAT CONVERSATION OUR SOURCE WAS EXTREMELY OF THE GALTIERI GOVERNMENT'S DECISION TO INVAD THE FALKLANDS AND DARKLY PESSIMISTIC ABOUT THE FUTURE. FOLLOWING ARE SOME OF THE HIGHLIGHTS OF HIS REMARKS:

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: ALAN H FLANIGAN
DATE/CASE ID: 26 MAR 2007 200601451

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A) THE GALTIERI GOVERNMENT WOULD FALL IF IT DID NOT OBTAIN A FIXED COMMITMENT FROM THE BRITISH FOR RECOGNITION OF ARGENTINE SOVEREIGNTY IN THE MALVINAS. THE DATE FOR EFFECTIVE SOVEREIGNTY IN THE MALVINAS. THE DATE FOR EFFECTIVE SOV- EREIGNTY COULD BE IN SIX MONTHS, A YEAR OR EVEN PERHAPS LONGER, BUT A DEADLINE WOULD HAVE TO BE ESTABLISHED.

B) GALTIERI MIGHT SURVIVE IN OFFICE IF HE GETS THAT COMMIT- MENT, BUT SUCH SURVIVAL IS FAR FROM CERTAIN. IF GALTIERI DOES CLEARLY "WIN," HIS NEXT MOVE MIGHT BE TO SEEK POPULAR ELECTION AS PRESIDENT AS EARLY AS THIS YEAR. (COMMENT: GALTIERI'S PROSPECTS IN ANYTHING APPROACHING AN HONEST ELECTION WOULD SEEM EXCEEDINGLY SLIM TO US.)

C) GALTIERI WILL SURELY FAIL IF THERE IS NO FIXED DATE FOR ARGENTINE SOVEREIGNTY. FROM GALTIERI'S PERSPECTIVE IT WOULD BE BETTER TO FIGHT A LOSING WAR--AND OUR SOURCE WAS SURE ARGENTINA WOULD LOSE--THAN SURRENDER ON THE SOVEREIGNTY ISSUE.

D) THERE ARE NO POLITICIANS IN THE COUNTRY WHO THINK THAT THE INVASION OF THE ISLANDS WAS ANYTHING OTHER THAN A COLOSSAL ERROR. THERE IS A WIDESPREAD BELIEF THAT THE PRESIDENT AND HIS ADVISORS ARE INCOMPETENT.

E) IF THERE IS A MAJOR INCIDENT IN WHICH LARGE NUMBERS OF ARGENTINES ARE KILLED ("A SHIP IS SUNK AND 400 DIE") THE PUBLIC WILL BE UNCONTROLLABLE. AMONG THEIR TARGETS WILL BE THE US EMBASSY, HE SAID.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BUENOS AIRES 2450

USCINCSO FOR INTAFF, CINCLANT FOR POLAD

F) IF GALTIERI IS OUSTED AS A RESULT OF THE CRISIS, HE WILL BE REPLACED BY AN ARMY GENERAL. ONE SCENARIO WOULD PRODUCE A RIGHT-WING NATIONALISTIC DICTATORSHIP. ANOTHER, WHICH THE SOURCE PREFERRED, WOULD BE THE SELECTION OF A GENERAL TO PRESIDE OVER A TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY. HE SAID THERE IS NO ACTIVE-DUTY GENERAL WHO COULD PERFORM THIS TASK. AMONG THE RETIRED, FOR DIFFERENT REASONS, EX-PRESIDENTS VIDELA AND VIOLA ARE BOTH OUT OF THE RUNNING. THE TWO WHO HAVE THE BEST CHANCE ARE GENERALS HORACIO LIENDO AND VILLAREAL - BOTH OF WHOM HAVE GOOD POLITICAL CONNECTIONS. THEY SHARE

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TIES TO PERONIST POLITICIANS AND FRONDIZI'S MID. VILLAREAL ALSO HAS GOOD TIES TO CONSERVATIVE POLITICIANS AND THE RADICALS (RADICALS HAVE TOLD US THIS TOO). LIENDO HAS LINES OUT TO THE PERONIST UNIONS AND VILLAREAL COULD MATCH HIM VERY QUICKLY. OUR SOURCE CONCLUDED, AND ONE OF LIENDO'S ADVISERS HAS AGREED, THOHEUAT ON BALANCE VILLAREAL IS THE FAVORITE IN SUCH A SWEEPSTAKE.

G) IN THE LAST FEWNDAYS OR SO THE GOVERNMENT HAS PULLED BACK FROM SUGGESTING PUBLICLY AND PRIVATELY THAT ARGENTINA IS REACHING OUT TO THE SOVIET UNION. IT HAS ALSO DAMPENED DOWN THE ANTI-AMERICAN CAMPAIGN THAT WAS

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GETTING UNDERWAY. THE SOURCE MADE THE POINT SEVERAL TIMES, THAT HE WAS NEVER VERY HAPPY WITH GALTIERI'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE UNITED STATES WHICH MADE ARGENTINA SEEM A US SATELLITE. ARGENTINA SHOULD BE PRO-WESTERN BUT INDEPENDENT AND GALTIERI EXCEEDED WISE AND REASONABLE LIMITS.

H) OUR SOURCE SAID HE IS NOW 41 YEARS OLD AND HE NOW KNOWS THAT DURING HIS LIFETIME HE WILL NEVER SEE A "SERIOUS" ARGENTINA. HE MEANT BY THIS A STABLE, DEMOCRATIC AND PROSPEROUS COUNTRY. HE SAID HIS CHILDREN MAY BUT HE WON'T.

I) THE TROOPS NOW IN THE MALVINAS ARE YOUNG AND ILLTRAINED.
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