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WHITE HOUSE SITUATION ROOM

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517338 DATE 04 28 82

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DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS TO SECDEF AND DIA  
E. O. 12065: RDS-1 4/27/12 (STREATOR, E. J.) OR-M  
TAGS: UK, AR, FA

SUBJECT: THE FALKLANDS CONFLICT: HMG PONDERS ADDITIONAL  
- MILITARY MEASURES

1. ~~SECRET~~ - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. SUMMARY: WITH SOUTH GEORGIA RETAKEN, HMG IS NOW  
LOOKING TOWARD ADDITIONAL MILITARY STEPS TO BUILD PRESSURE  
FOR A SETTLEMENT ON BRITISH TERMS. FOR THE MOMENT, MRS.  
THATCHER HAS A RELATIVELY FREE HAND. GIVEN HER OWN  
UNCOMFORTISING MOOD, WE EXPECT HER TO FORCE THE MILITARY  
FACE, CROSSING ADDITIONAL STEPS IN THE NEAR TERM TO  
MINIMIZE RISK AND MAXIMIZE PUBLIC IMPACT. END SUMMARY.

3. WE BELIEVE THAT HMG CONSIDERS AN ALL-OUT ASSAULT ON  
THE FALKLANDS A LAST RESORT. TO KEEP MILITARY PRESSURE  
ON THE ARGENTINES HMG COULD FOLLOW-UP THE SOUTH GEORGIA  
SUCCESS WITH A SERIES OF MILITARY ACTIONS INCLUDING ONE  
OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING:

- A. UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE: THE PRESS TODAY IS  
FILLED WITH SPECULATION THAT THE NEXT MILITARY STEP WILL  
BE UNDERTAKEN ON THE FALKLANDS BY BRITISH SPECIAL AIR  
SERVICE (SAS) OR SPECIAL BOAT SERVICE (SBS) OPERATIONS.

MESSAGE (CONTINUED):

INDEED, THERE ARE REPORTS THAT THE SAS HAS ALREADY LANDED.  
OBVIOUS TARGETS FOR SUCH ACTION ON THE FALKLANDS WOULD  
INCLUDE POL FACILITIES, AIRCRAFT AT STANLEY AIRPORT,  
ESPECIALLY C-130 TRANSPORTS, AND WATER STORAGE SITES.  
THE BRITISH ARE CAPABLE OF DESTROYING POL FACILITIES WITH  
SAS OR SBS PERSONNEL WITHOUT CAUSING EXCESSIVE COLLATERAL  
DAMAGE OR CIVILIAN CASUALTIES.

- B. TARGETS OF OPPORTUNITY: WITH THE MARITIME AND,  
PERHAPS, AIR EXCLUSION AREA NOW ESTABLISHED, THE BRITISH  
HAVE THE CAPABILITY TO ATTACK ARGENTINE NAVAL VESSELS  
IN THE EXCLUSION ZONE OR ARGENTINE MILITARY AIRCRAFT ON  
SUPPLY FLIGHTS TO STANLEY AIRPORT. WE SUSPECT THAT THE  
BRITISH HOPE THAT THE ARGENTINES OFFER SUCH TARGETS OF  
OPPORTUNITY OVER THE NEXT FEW DAYS.

- C. STANLEY AIRPORT: IF THEY GO AHEAD AGAINST THE

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AIRPORT. SENIOR MOD SOURCES TELL US THE BRITISH WILL LIKELY FIRST ATTACK WITH HARRIERS OR VULCANS (STAGED FROM ASCENSION ISLAND), POSSIBLY FOLLOWED BY AN AIR ATTACK AGAINST ARGENTINE GROUND FORCES. WE UNDERSTAND VICTOR TANKER AIRCRAFT ARE IN PLACE ON ASCENSION.

4. FOR THE MOMENT, WE BELIEVE THE BRITISH WILL CONCENTRATE ON THIS KIND OF DEBILITATING BUT NOT NECESSARILY DECISIVE MILITARY STEP, WHICH COULD DO THE TRICK, AND WOULD IN ANY CASE HELP TIGHTEN THE DIPLOMATIC SCREWS. AN ALL-OUT ASSAULT ON THE FALKLANDS IS STILL HIGH RISK, AND WE NOTE THAT KEY BRITISH FORCES REQUIRED TO LAUNCH A MAJOR ASSAULT ON THE FALKLANDS REMAIN EITHER NEAR ASCENSION ISLAND -- AT LEAST A WEEK FROM THE FALKLANDS -- OR THE U.K. THE ADDITIONAL RAF HARRIERS ARE 2-3 WEEKS AWAY AND ADDITIONAL PARATROOPERS DEPARTED BRITAIN ONLY YESTERDAY. FINALLY, WE NOTE THAT PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED BRITISH CASUALTIES HAVE BEEN LIMITED TO ONE DEATH CAUSED BY A TRAINING ACCIDENT. REPORTS OF LIMITED CASUALTIES WILL LIKELY NOT DERAIL MRS. THATCHER'S USE OF FORCE -- SUCH REPORTS ARE COMMON FROM NORTHERN IRELAND. BUT LARGE SCALE CASUALTIES ARE ANOTHER MATTER AND A RISK THAT MRS. THATCHER WILL WANT TO AVOID FOR THE TIME BEING. LOUIS

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