

1. ARGENTINE/UK: SITUATION UPDATE (U)

By CAS, NARA, Date ***4/10/81

(S/NF)

[REDACTED] the Royal Air Force (RAF) is not authorized to fly beyond Ascension Island and the UK currently had not received permission from any South American country for either landings or overflights. [REDACTED] RAF C-130 aircraft have insufficient range to fly cargo from the Ascension Islands to Port Stanley and as a result, the RAF is considering alternative air routes which would include refueling stops at several US airfields, Tahiti, Easter Island, and Chile. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] the threat posed by the Argentine aircraft, especially the A-4/SKYHAWK, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The greatest threat [REDACTED] would be the employment of the A-4's. The RAF is also concerned about the status of the Port Stanley airfield. According to British engineers, the 4,100 foot runway could be extended 2,000 feet in two to three weeks. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] two NIMROD aircraft were at Ascension Island and would be used for communications relay with the fleet. [REDACTED]

REDACTED

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[REDACTED] In air activity, [REDACTED] there has been a major movement of aircraft to air bases in the southern zone and an area within 200 nm of the southern Argentine coast and within a 200 nm radius of the Falklands has been declared a restricted zone for all foreign aircraft. The Army is also making preparations for a

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1. CONTINUED.

~~REDACTED~~

~~(S/NF)~~ Argentina has responded to the British proclamation of a 200-mile exclusive zone around the Falklands (effective 120401Z APRIL) by creating a South Atlantic Theater of Operations to defend a zone out to 200 nm from the mainland as well as a similar zone around the Falkland, South Georgia, and Sandwich Islands. According to press reporting, Argentine President GALTIERI declared yesterday that a UK blockade of the Falklands would mean war. If GALTIERI's comments are not just a face-saving gesture, a military clash is possible early next week.

~~ACTED~~

~~REDACTED~~

~~REDACTED~~

Since the Argentines are reportedly lengthening and hardening the air strip in Port Stanley to accomodate A-4, MIRAGE, PUCARA, and C-130 aircraft and reinforcing the island with additional troops and air defense equipment,

the weather will be a major factor, as it will deteriorate steadily over the next three to four months with the onset of winter in the South Atlantic.

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~~(TSU/NF/NG/SI)~~ In international developments, the Soviets are apparently endorsing Argentine claims, although this support has been low-key. Since Moscow's relations with the UK are strained, the Soviets may be willing to support the Argentines to further their trade relationship; Argentine grain exports have been crucial in alleviating recent Soviet agricultural shortfalls. The Soviet's, however, have not offered diplomatic aid to Buenos Aires which has reportedly disappointed the Argentines. Additionally, it is estimated that Soviet military activity in response to the Argentine/UK situation will probably be restricted to locating data

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on British ships. [REDACTED]

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