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5-19-82

Jim Rentschler  
Roger Fontaine

Subject: Contingency Planning for the next 24 hrs in the Falklands

It seems likely that the UK will take some level of violent action against the Falklands within the next 24 hrs. Against that possibility could you please address the following issues in a contingency paper for use by the Judge at an NSC or SSC meeting tomorrow (Thursday 5/20). Base your analysis on the following assumptions: That the British attack will not be militarily decisive but will drag on for more than a week; that it will disrupt the de Cuellar efforts at the UN; and that the British will not attack the mainland. Under those circumstances how should we act so as to:

- Assure the earliest British success with the least damage to our interests in South America?
- What actions will be required at the UN in connection with the end of the de Cuellar mission; the likely UNGA debate?
- What briefings should be prepared for the Congress?
- What should be our public affairs policy/statements?
- How should we react to pending, and likely escalated UK requests for assistance?

With respect to the Falklands longer term:

Should we bend every possible effort to assisting the British to achieve early decisive results? Can they achieve such prompt results even with our help?

If they cannot achieve early results under any circumstances, what should that imply for our assistance to them? If it is to draw out, when and how should we attempt to resurrect our peace-making efforts?

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NLS FOI-055 #26873  
BY LOJ NARA, DATE 1/28/08

Our objective remains a peaceful resolution of the dispute with as little damage inflicted on the participants as possible: military, political, and economic.

1. No quick British success is likely except at an unacceptable cost to the British. In fact, the U.K. will not be ready for an even credible assault on the Stanley area until after May 26. Any military assistance we would provide that would supplement and therefore assure a quick military victory could not be ready for another several weeks at the minimum.

2. The end of the UN effort will be signalled by the SYG himself. He will report to the Security Council his failure. A British attack on the Falklands will spark an Argentine request for a Security Council meeting. If the Argentines press for a resolution condemning the U.K is forthcoming, the U.K. will veto it but Argentina can claim a moral victory. Our problem will be assessing our own position. Absention is the best route. A likely followup will be a UNGA debate. Argentina's foreign office counts 75 votes in favor of Argentina assuming a British attack on the islands.

3. Congressional leadership should be briefed on the status of the dispute and what our effort will next consist of. The Congress was overwhelmingly pro-British, but feelings run shallow, and there is little mood to thwart another U.S. peace effort, especially if it comes from the President.

4. Our statements should studiously avoid anything that inflames either side. At the proper moment, it should be disclosed the U.S. in light of the SYG's failure is ready to make another effort.

5. Any requests that imply direct combat support for the British should be denied. We should remind the British that the U.S. effort is to secure a peaceful and just solution to this problem, not support a military reconquest of the islands per se.

A. No and no.

B. Resurrecting the peace effort will have to come at the personal and presidential level. It is the President, for example, who must publically call for a ceasefire. It is the President who must send a very personal message to both leaders outling where we are and what is at stake. The two letters must be very different meeting the needs and characteristics of both leaders--forget governments for the moment. The core message remains the same as to what the President proposes to do, but its costuming is very different. The core proposal would revolve around a presidential guarantee for a settlement. The President as arbiter?

It is not the content of the proposals so much as the package.

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NLS FOI-055 #26875  
BY LOJ NARA, DATE 1/28/08