

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION REPORT

Continuation Sheet

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Report [redacted]

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Originator [redacted]

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22. DETAILS. [redacted] who was stationed on the Malvinas Islands for eight months, reported that the Island's population is fearful that they will be sold out by Great Britain. The visit to the Malvinas in February 1977 by United Kingdom Minister of State Ted ROWLANDS, did little to placate the Kelpers' apprehensions. They were suspicious of British intentions before his arrival and even more so after his departure. [redacted] the Islanders understand that considerable investment in the territory would be required to make the community economically viable. He added that the population was particularly distressed at England's apparent unwillingness to help them, especially in view of the fact that the islanders have paid more in taxes to Great Britain than they had received in support from Her Majesty's Government. They contend, perhaps unrealistically, that the Malvinas can make a go of it, if given some attention. They cite the profitability of the Falkland Islands Company and the areas' natural resources, particularly fish products and potential offshore oil. Yet, they apparently hold little hope that the UK will come to their assistance and settle the dispute with Argentina in favor of the islanders.

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2. [redacted] will never yield on the issue of sovereignty over the Malvinas. He added that Great Britain can not continue, on an indefinite basis, to economically support the Kelpers and eventually would have to come to terms with Argentina. In this regard, Argentina can wear the British down and can afford to play a waiting game.

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3. (C/NOFORN) The British have a 30 man Marine Detachment stationed on the Island. The group consists of one officer (a major), at least three senior non-commissioned officers, with the remainder being enlisted personnel. The tour of duty is one year and normally changes in April during the annual visit of the HMS ENDURANCE. The detachment is equipped with an 80-100 foot patrol boat (reportedly unarmed) which transports the troops from one island to another. The majority of the year is devoted to training which includes search and rescue operations, guard duty, marksmanship, scuba diving, wharf repair and survival training. In the latter, 5-8 marines are generally landed on one of the smaller islands for a week to ten days and given the mission to round up the Falkland Island Company's cattle for transshipment to Great Britain.

COMMENT: (C) The future of the Malvinas Islands is an emotional issue for both the Kelpers and Argentines. The islanders, who are of British stock, want nothing to do with the Argentine Government which they consider volatile and unstable. Nevertheless, the Argentines will continue to press for the return of the Malvinas, considering any other solution as an insult to national dignity. It is a no-win issue for either side. The Kelpers are an aging society, far removed from the queen. Attrition is taking its toll as the young people move away. Britain appears to find it more and

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more difficult to financially support the islands despite their potential natural resources. The Argentines also have serious economic problems making it unlikely that the Malvinas would receive much support should they revert to Argentine control. Further, Argentina already has vast unpopulated regions and it is doubtful that too many Argentines would be willing to occupy the islands with its inhospitable climate. Finally both sides flaunt the island's offshore oil potential. Yet climate conditions and winds in that remote part of the world would make exploration a hazardous and costly venture.

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