

FLEET TO BEGIN LANDINGS

UNITED NATIONS, FRIDAY - BRITAIN'S SOUTH ATLANTIC BATTLE FLEET WAS UNDER ORDERS TODAY TO BEGIN LANDINGS AND HIT-AND-RUN RAIDS ON THE ARGENTINE-HELD FALKLAND ISLANDS FOLLOWING THE COLLAPSE OF U.N. EFFORTS FOR A DIPLOMATIC SETTLEMENT.

THERE WAS NO IMMEDIATE WORD OF MILITARY ACTION IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC EARLY TODAY, BUT A SENIOR BRITISH GOVERNMENT SOURCE SAID COMMANDERS OF THE 5,000 MARINES AND PARATROOPS WITH THE BRITISH TASK FORCE HAD BEEN GIVEN THE GO-AHEAD TO LAUNCH A WAR OF ATTRITION AGAINST THE ESTIMATED 9,000 ARGENTINE TROOPS ON THE ISLANDS.

A SET-PIECE BATTLE INVOLVING A FULL-SCALE INVASION AGAINST STRONGLY ENTRENCHED DEFENCES APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN RULED OUT BY THE GOVERNMENT, AT LEAST FOR THE TIME BEING. "ATTRITION IS THE NAME OF THE GAME NOW," THE SOURCE SAID.

GOVERNMENT SOURCES SPOKE OF THE "MILITARY SCREW BEING TIGHTENED QUITE QUICKLY AND QUITE TIGHTLY," WITH THE AIM OF ISOLATING AND DEMORALISING ARGENTINE FORCES.

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