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## Thatcher's Bit Of Pressure Angers Reagan

Margaret Thatcher tried a bit of diplomatic blackmail on President Reagan during her recent visit to Washington. It was the best-kept secret of a supposedly chummy confab.

Thatcher's little power play was confided to my associate Dale Van Atta by sources familiar with the incident. They said she succeeded only in getting Reagan's Irish dander up. Here's the story:

The British occupy a strategic little piece of earth that straddles the smuggling routes into southern Mexico. It's called Belize, and it's tucked under Mexico's big toe.

The toe is heavily infected with Marxist revolutionaries who are biding their time until Mexico becomes ripe for revolution. Given the raging inflation and rampant corruption that afflicts Mexico, this could be all too soon.

However determined Reagan may be to stop a Marxist takeover in El Salvador, he is 10 times more concerned about Mexico. He does not want the lurking revolutionaries, therefore, to get arms from Cuba.

Happily, the most convenient smuggling routes through Belize have been effectively blocked by the British.

Thatcher was aware of all this as she explained for Washington. But she also had a worry of her own, a fear that Argentina still has designs on the Falkland Islands. So she tried to persuade Reagan not to resume sales of U.S. arms to the Argentines, whose arsenal was badly depleted by their disastrous attempt to seize the Falklands last year.

So under Thatcher's tutelage, British officials coyly informed their U.S. hosts that Britain was "willing to keep troops in Belize" as long as the arms embargo on Argentina stayed in effect. The implication was that the British might pull out if Thatcher didn't get her way.

White House sources reported that the president was infuriated by this "obvious blackmail."

Though the British garrison in Belize is small, it has been essential in limiting the flow of Cuban arms through Belize to the Marxist rebels in the Mexican toe. "As long as the British stay in Belize, they and the United States will be able to prevent large shipments of arms from Cuba reaching the rebels in Mexico," an intelligence source explained.

There's also another reason Reagan wants the British troops to stay: their presence will discourage the neighboring Guatemalans from in-

vading Belize, which they claim belongs to them.

A top secret CIA report warns that Guatemala would invade shortly after the British pulled out. The result would be carnage on an appalling scale. Guatemala's rulers are notoriously anti-black, and a large percentage of Belize's 143,000 inhabitants is either black, creole or Garifuna, a black-Indian mixture.

Reagan doesn't want to risk the slaughter of the black population. But he also doesn't want to offend Guatemala, whose good will is essential to his efforts to subdue the Marxist revolution in Central America.

It was this situation that Thatcher tried to exploit. The attempt failed, but it left a sour taste. As one source explained, the United States sent the British millions of dollars worth of arms during the Falklands war and had to redeploy NATO forces to cover the loss of British ships.

**Polygraph Puzzle:** The administration seems determined to ferret out leakers—or intimidate potential leakers—by giving polygraph tests to more than 4 million government employees who have access to classified information.

However, a still-secret review prepared for Rep. Jack Brooks (D-Tex.) by the Office of Technology Assessment has found little evidence that polygraphs would be useful for plugging leaks.