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COS 56TH MEETING/82

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MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

CHIEFS OF STAFF COMMITTEE

CONFIDENTIAL ANNEX

TO

COS 56TH MEETING/82 HELD ON
SATURDAY 22 MAY 1982 AT 10.15 am*Handwritten notes:*
Key
Re Glover/Re
WestaOPERATION CORPORATEITEM 1. INTELLIGENCE

1. SIR TERENCE LEWIN invited the Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff (Intelligence) to update them on current intelligence.
2. LIEUTENANT GENERAL GLOVER (Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff (Intelligence)) reviewed the intelligence published in the latest summary (1).

ITEM 2. OWN FORCES

3. SIR TERENCE LEWIN summarised the operations of the previous 24 hours in the light of a briefing he had received that morning from the Task Force Commander. He outlined the damage and casualties sustained by the Task Force, and compared these with the claimed losses inflicted on the Argentines. He concluded by outlining the Task Force Commander's current intentions.
4. In discussion the following points were made:
 - a. Ships of the Task Force had deliberately taken the weight of the Argentine air attacks, allowing the Landing Force to disembark without undue incident, and their shipping to remain unharmed.
 - b. Once the 3 Phantom aircraft (2) had arrived at Ascension Island, the 3 Harrier GR3 aircraft presently stationed there would be available for redeployment to the Falkland Islands if necessary.

Note:

1. INTSUM No 96 220600Z MAY 82.
2. COS 55th Meeting/82, Item 6.

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ITEM 3. PUBLIC RELATIONS

5. MR McDONALD (Deputy Chief of Public Relations) reported on Press coverage.
6. In discussion the following points were made:
- a. The Secretary of State would make a statement after mid-day, after which he would take questions from the Press. The Chief of the Defence Staff would also be present.
 - b. The Deputy Chief of Public Relations, possibly accompanied by an officer from the staff of the Task Force Commander, would give a Press briefing that afternoon.
 - c. The sinking of HMS ARDENT would be announced in the Secretary of State's statement, to place it in the context of the whole day's operations.
7. Summing up, SIR TERENCE LEWIN said he would obtain from the Task Force Commander the latest information about survivors from HMS ARDENT before the Secretary of State made his statement.

Note by the Secretary

The Chief of the Defence Staff, the Secretary of State and the Minister of State (for the Armed Forces) then left the meeting. SIR MICHAEL BEETHAM assumed the chair.

ITEM 4. ACTIONS AND DECISIONS REQUIRED

8. The Committee noted the summary of actions in hand (3).

ITEM 5. PORT STANLEY AIRFIELD

9. The Committee had before them two submissions (4) to the Secretary of State, seeking agreement to the procurement of AM2 airfield matting from the United States for the repair of Port Stanley airfield.

Notes:

3. Annex A to COS 55th Meeting/82.
4. Attachments to COS(Misc) 234/742/1 dated 21 May 1982.

10. In discussion the following points were agreed:
- a. Irrespective of the long term future of the Falkland Islands, after a successful reoccupation of the islands there would be an immediate requirement for an operational airfield capable of accepting C130 Hercules aircraft for troop reinforcements, which required a runway 6,000 feet long. It was too early to plan for other air operations, such as air defence operations, before long term intentions were known. However a runway of that length should be suitable for these as well, though it would not suffice for VC10 aircraft.
 - b. A decision on the siting of the runway needed to be taken within the next 4 weeks, before the earliest date at which the matting could reach the Falkland Islands. The principal factor in this would be the Government's long term intentions. If it was intended eventually to construct an airport to international standards, the existing runway should be left clear for long term improvement; otherwise it might be preferable to lay the matting over it.
 - c. A major factor which might influence a favourable US decision would be that, once purchased, the matting would be a defence asset; it could at a future date be lifted and returned to the United Kingdom for contingency use in a NATO setting.
 - d. If the matting was purchased but subsequently not used, it was possible that the US authorities would accept it back.
11. Summing up, SIR MICHAEL BEETHAM said they would wish to agree that there was a military requirement to obtain the matting as soon as possible, to ensure the earliest capability to produce an operational airfield in the Falkland Islands. They would wish to invite the Permanent Under Secretary to inform the Secretary of State that they supported the proposal, and also to invite him to amend the draft minute for the Secretary of State to send the US Secretary of State, in the light of their discussion.

Annex:

- A. Operation CORPORATE - Actions in Hand (1 page only).

OPERATION CORPORATE - ACTIONS IN HAND

ITEM	ARISING FROM COS MEETING	DECISION OR ACTION REQUIRED	SPONSOR	ACTION/ DECISION BY	CONTINUED	CURRENT STATE
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)
0023	6/82 Item 1 (re-titled 40/82)	Military Options for Repossession of the Falkland Islands	ACDS(Pol)	DPS/DS 11	7/82 Item 4 12/82 Item 6 35/82 Item 4 40/82 Item 7 43/82 Item 5 50/82 Item 5 54/82 Item 5	To be updated for COS 27 May
0091	54/82 Item 5	Contingency Studies	ACDS(Pol)	ACDS(Pol)		For COS 25 May