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CABINET

DEFENCE AND OVERSEA POLICY COMMITTEE

SUB-COMMITTEE ON THE SOUTH ATLANTIC AND
THE FALKLAND ISLANDS

MINUTES of a Meeting held at
10 Downing Street on
MONDAY 24 MAY 1982 at 10.30 am

PRESENT

The Rt Hon Margaret Thatcher MP
Prime Minister

The Rt Hon William Whitelaw MP
Secretary of State for the
Home Department

The Rt Hon John Nott MP
Secretary of State for Defence

The Rt Hon Cecil Parkinson MP
Chancellor of the Duchy of
Lancaster and Paymaster General

THE FOLLOWING WERE ALSO PRESENT

The Rt Hon Sir Michael Havers QC MP
Attorney General

Admiral of the Fleet
Sir Terence Lewin
Chief of the Defence Staff

Sir Antony Acland
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Sir Michael Palliser
Cabinet Office

SECRETARIAT

Sir Robert Armstrong
Mr R L Wade-Gery
Mr R L L Facer
Brigadier J A C G Eyre

SUBJECT

1. MILITARY ISSUES
2. POLITICAL ISSUES

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1. MILITARY SITUATION

THE CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE STAFF briefed the Sub-Committee on the latest military situation.

THE PRIME MINISTER, summing up the discussion, said that it was desirable for the first awards for valour in the South Atlantic operations to be announced no later than the Birthday Honours due on 12 June. There were disturbing reports that Israeli military supplies for Argentina were continuing and might be stepped up. Pressure should therefore be brought to bear on Israel in all appropriate ways, eg through the Jewish community in Britain and through investigative journalism.

The Sub-Committee -

Invited the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary to devise ways of influencing the Israelis as indicated by the Prime Minister in her summing up.

2. POLITICAL ISSUES

The Sub-Committee had before them telegrams nos. 817, 819, 821-6 and 828-30 from the United Kingdom Permanent Representative at the United Nations, Sir Antony Parsons, reporting the latest developments in New York; and other telegrams reporting international attitudes.

THE PRIME MINISTER, summing up the discussion, said that Sir Antony Parsons was conducting Britain's case at the United Nations with great skill. He would need to continue to play his hand on the basis that military repossession of the Falklands was now in progress. Opinion in Britain would insist that it be completed. Meanwhile neither a ceasefire nor intervention by an international contact group would be acceptable. As regards the Pope's impending pastoral visit to Britain, it would be important to establish how far the authorities of the Roman Catholic Church wished to take advantage of the Government's offer to avoid Ministerial participation; and whether there was any likelihood of the Pope making controversial public statements on the Falklands crisis.

The Sub-Committee -

1. Invited the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary to instruct Sir Antony Parsons in accordance with the Prime Minister's summing up.
2. Invited the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary to report further on prospects and policy in relation to the Papal visit.

Cabinet Office

24 May 1982

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