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OD(SA)(82) 30th Meeting

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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 10 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 Francis Pym MP Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs

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 QL 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 G Eyre

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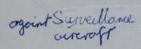
1. MILITARY ISSUES

The Sub-Committee had before them a note by the Secretaries (OD(SA)(82) 45) covering a note by the Ministry of Defence on Rules of Engagement relating to Argentine non-combat aircraft.

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

THE PRIME MINISTER, summing up the discussion, said that British forces were entitled to treat as hostile any Argentine aircraft which was identified by at least its radar characteristics and flight path as being engaged in surveillance of British units. If British air cover was not available for interception the Royal Navy would have no choice but to seek to destroy each aircraft without warning, eg by missile. The professional advice was that there was no real danger of such action being taken, by mistake, against aircraft which were not Argentine or not engaged in surveillance. should be given urgently to the line to be taken in public if British forces did destroy an Argentine surveillance aircraft. More generally, relations with the media were giving rise to concern. Correspondents with the Task Force were complaining of censorship and lack of information; on the other hand, disclosures or even speculation in the media could assist Argentina's military efforts and thus endanger British lives. problems should be urgently addressed by the Permanent Under Secretary of the Ministry of Defence, at one of his regular meetings with Editors; he might appropriately be accompanied, for this purpose, by the Chief of the Defence Staff. Members of the Sub-Committee would need to be carefully briefed later in the week on plans and prospects for a British landing in force on the Falkland Islands if that should prove necessary.

The Sub-Committee -



- 1. Invited the Defence Secretary to authorise Rules of Engagement for the air defence of Ascension Island, on the basis proposed in paragraph 10 of the note attached to OD(SA)(82) 45.
- 2. Invited the Defence Secretary to arrange for an early approach to media Editors to be made as suggested by the Prime Minister in her summing up.
- 3. Invited the Defence Secretary to arrange for them to be briefed at 1700 on 13 May, in the Cabinet Office Briefing Room, on plans and prospects for a landing in force.

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2. DIPLOMATIC ISSUES

The Sub-Committee had before them telegrams nos. 691-2 and 694-5 from the United Kingdom Mission to the United Nations in New York.

THE PRIME MINISTER, summing up the discussion, said that the British Representative at the United Nations, Sir Antony Parsons, had correctly identified what were likely to be the points of greatest difficulty in the current negotiations in New York. He did not need further instructions immediately. But the evolving situation would need to be carefully assessed the following day.

The Sub-Committee
Agreed to resume their discussion at 0930 on 11 May.

Cabinet Office

10 May 1982



Ref: B06495

CABINET OFFICE 70 WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2AS

14th May 1982

Dear David,

OD(SA)(82) 30th Meeting, Item 1, Conclusion 1, which correctly recorded approval of paragraph 10 of OD(SA)(82) 45, mistakenly referred to the air defence of Ascension Island (which was dealt with by Conclusion 2 of OD(SA)(82) 29th Meeting). The Conclusion should read -

"1. Invited the Defence Secretary to authorise Rules of Engagement against surveillance aircraft on the basis proposed in paragraph 10 of the note attached to OD(SA)(82) 45."

Jun, ever Petert

R L WADE-GERY

D B Omand Esq. Ministry of Defence.

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