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Mr. Fearn

CHIEFS OF STAFF MEETING: 6 APRIL

The following points of concern to the FCO arose from this morning's Chiefs of Staff meeting. I had to leave at 11 a.m., and Mr. Weston may therefore have additional points to record.

(a) Use of reconnaissance and refuelling facilities in Brazil. In the course of the initial intelligence presentation, I referred to Argentine press reports that a Brazilian Minister had said that Brazil could not prevent British ships bound for the Falklands from provisioning in Brazilian ports as no state of war exists. The Chief of Air Staff and the Chief of Naval Staff both said that it would be of considerable value if they were able to have facilities for air and maritime refuelling in Brazil. The Chief of the Naval Staff said that it would be particularly valuable if merchant ships, e.g. SS Canberra, could refuel there. The Chief of the Air Staff made a particular request that Nimrods, which I understand were to be demonstrated in Brazil later this month, could be sent there to operate reconnaissance out of Brazilian air space. I said that we would be prepared to put these questions to HM Ambassador in Brasilia but that the omens were not propitious. I quoted in particular Mr. Tickell's remarks about the "excessively prudent and sometimes intentionally ambiguous" reactions from the Brazilians so far. The Air Staff will nevertheless be putting a request to us, and I think that we should also specifically ask about the refuelling of SS Canberra.

(b) Military appreciation. There was a brief discussion about a revised Top Secret military appreciation paper, covering the various military options. This paper was shown to Mr. Nott last night, and I understand that a copy was given to the Prime Minister on a personal basis, but not for further circulation. A cover note was included making clear that it was for Ministers to consider the implications of the various military options. Mr. Weston will be able to make a copy available and I think that the Secretary of State will wish to see it as soon as convenient. In response to a question, CDS said that Mr. Nott's first reaction had been that the political comments in the paper were "too pessimistic".

(c) Identification of Soviet submarines. Following on the Secretary of State's meeting this morning, I asked CNS to what extent our SSNs would be able to distinguish Argentine from other, including Soviet, submarines. He said that he could give me no watertight assurance unless submarines were to fortuitously give away, by underwater telephone conversation, which nationality they were. There might also be indications from the nature of the sonar use, and he commented that Soviet submarines were likely

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to remain passive while the Argentines might have an operational need to transmit. In brief, it is possible, but by no means certain, that reliable identification could be made. I said that this was a point which was likely to be of considerable concern and interest to Ministers.

(d) Tierra del Fuego. There was some discussion of a paper (which Mr. Weston will also be bringing with him) discussing the option of a seizure of the Argentine half of the island of Tierra del Fuego. I set out the considerable political difficulties about any such action on the grounds (a) that it would draw us more closely into Chile's squabble with Argentina; (b) that any such seizure, if regarded as a bargaining counter, would be useless, since any return of the territory to Argentina would immediately land us in trouble with Chile; (c) and, thirdly, but by no means last, that an attack against Argentine territory would "cross the divide" in terms of Third World opinion. The CDS was inclined to discount any further action on this option.

J. Magee
L (P.R.H. Wright)
6 April, 1982.

cc Private Secretary
PS/Mr. Hurd
PS/PUS
Sir A. Acland
Sir I. Sinclair
Mr. Giffard
Mr. Gillmore
Mr. Ure
Mr. Weston, Defence Dept.
Mr. Fenn, News Dept.
Mr. Hulse
Mr. Williams, UN Dept.

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Handwritten initials/signature

Mr Wright

Thank you.

Handwritten initials/signature

- Copies to: PS/PUS
 Sir A Acland
 Mr Bullard
 Mr Giffard
 Mr Gillmore
 Mr Ure
 Mr Fenn (News Dept)
 Mr Hulse (Emergency Unit)
 Mr Wilson (SED)
 Mr Fearn (Emergency Unit)

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CHIEFS OF STAFF MEETING: 6 APRIL

1. Two points came up at the Chiefs of Staff Meeting this morning after I replaced you at 1100 hours.

Rules of Engagement for SSNS

2. The Chiefs of Staff agreed a revised version of the Rules of Engagement, covered by a short plain language introduction. The latter was at the insistence of Sir Frank Cooper amended to strengthen the reference to the need for Ministerial authorisation. CDS intends to show these to Mr Nott this evening. They will then be transmitted by the First Sea Lord to the SSNS around midday tomorrow. The Rules of Engagement remain in the form of an a la carte menu from which certain Rules will be selected and activated on Ministerial authority as and when the situation requires. I believe it is generally understood that such Ministerial authority would have to be given on a collective basis and not by Mr Nott alone. Nevertheless the catalogue contains at least one Rule, which I have discussed with Sir A Acland and yourself, whose implementation could have the most dangerous consequences. Sir A Acland took the view that the Secretary of State should be informed of how matters now stood on this.

Don.

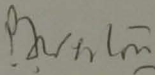
Gibraltar

3. There was a brief discussion of the need to reinforce Gibraltar. The Chiefs of Staff had before them the Paper prepared by the Defence Secretariat in conjunction with the FCO on 'Gibraltar: Is There a Spanish Military Threat?' Some of the Chiefs evidently felt that there was a prima facie case for some reinforcement (the item had been put on the agenda at the request of the Assistant Chief of Defence Staff (Operations)).

The Army, Navy and Air Force alternatives were mentioned briefly. CDS played a generally moderating role and it was left that this should be looked at further. I was invited to give an

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FCO view, but said that I did not wish to add to the assessment in the Paper. There was a certain sense that if the FCO representative could be heard to argue that the threat was negligible, this would indeed strengthen the case for reinforcement.



P J Weston
Emergency Unit

6 April 1982

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