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Prime MinisterA.P.C. $\frac{6}{5}$

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PRIME MINISTER

MS.

Falkland Islands

I have been considering, and discussing with the Ministry of Defence and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, how to ensure that you are fully briefed on military and political developments for the daily meetings of OD(SA), and thus enabled to deal effectively, and from as complete an information base as possible, with the issues that require consideration and decision.

2. I have had much in mind that your colleagues on OD(SA), and particularly the Home Secretary and the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, who do not have Departmental support on these matters, need no less to be brought fully up to date for OD(SA) meetings.

3. I propose as follows:-

- (a) Meetings of OD(SA) should normally begin at 9.30 am.
- (b) Each morning, starting 10th May, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office will provide a summary of diplomatic developments and prospects, with the key telegrams attached. These will be available at 9.00 am for you to read in No. 10; for the Home Secretary and the Chancellor of the Duchy to read in the Cabinet Office; and for the Secretary of State for Defence to read in the Ministry of Defence.
- (c) Each meeting of OD(SA), starting tomorrow, should begin with a comprehensive briefing and updating on military developments by the Chief of the Defence Staff. This would include an account of the intelligence on Argentinian dispositions and movements; an account of our own dispositions and movements; an account of naval or air actions since the previous briefing; and some indication of the plans and intentions of the force and fleet Commanders.
- (d) This full military briefing should be followed by a short briefing on the diplomatic situation by Sir Antony Acland. This would assume that people had read the written summary described at (b); Sir Antony would pick out salient points and add any last minute up-dating that might be needed.



SECRET

- (e) Policy discussions should be avoided during the briefing stages: hence the suggestion that the briefings should be given by the professionals, rather than by the two Ministers concerned.
- (f) The Secretary of State for Defence should then introduce any military considerations and decisions on which discussion was needed. So far as possible operational decisions should be considered separately from presentational decisions, and in that order.
- (g) The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary should similarly introduce any diplomatic decisions needed, observing (so far as possible) a similar distinction between diplomatic operations and public presentation.

RA

Robert Armstrong

6th May 1982

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