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OD(SA)(82) 11th Meeting

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CABINET

DEFENCE AND OVERSEA POLICY COMMITTEE

SUB-COMMITTEE ON THE SOUTH ATLANTIC AND  
THE FALKLAND ISLANDS

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MINUTES of a Meeting held at  
10 Downing Street on  
TUESDAY 20 APRIL 1982 at 12 noon

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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

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

Admiral Sir Henry Leach  
Chief of Naval Staff

Sir Antony Acland  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Sir Michael Palliser  
Cabinet Office

SECRETARIAT

Sir Robert Armstrong  
Mr R L Wade-Gery  
Mr D H Colvin  
Brigadier J A C G Eyre

SUBJECT

SITUATION IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC

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SITUATION IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC

Previous Reference: OD(SA)(82) 10th Meeting

THE PRIME MINISTER, summing up the discussion, said that a satisfactory reply had been received from the United States Secretary of State, Mr Haig, to the message sent by the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary the previous evening. In accordance with the suggestion now made by Mr Haig the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, who was in Brussels that morning to brief his European Community colleagues, would visit Washington on 22-23 April. He would be discussing with Mr Haig British counter-proposals on the draft agreement and how these should be negotiated with the Argentines. She would announce this visit in Parliament that afternoon. Mr Haig's message, though it suggested that further military action might have adverse consequences in the Organisation of American States, also emphasised that it was imperative for Britain to maintain military pressure. In these circumstances it seemed reasonable that Operation Paraquet to repossess South Georgia should proceed as planned, unless the Sub-Committee decided otherwise when they met again later that day after the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary's return from Brussels. In the meantime the views of Her Majesty's Ambassador in Washington should be sought in the strictest confidence. The Defence Secretary had rightly sent the following further instructions to the Commanding Officer.

While not overriding the primacy of military considerations and safety of our own forces, the Force Commander should know that the political needs of the present situation would best be served by a quick clean operation with maximum prisoners and minimum dead. If it comes to a conflict of priorities speed is secondary.

The Sub-Committee -

1. Took note that the Prime Minister would inform Parliament of the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary's impending visit to Washington.
2. Agreed to resume their discussion at 1830 that evening.

Cabinet Office

21 April 1982

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