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PRIME MINISTER

c. Sir Robert Amis Kong.

FALKLANDS: OD(SA) MEETING, 19 APRIL

Business at your meeting at 1115 tomorrow could conveniently be taken in the following order:

- (i) Diplomatic situation
- (ii) Military situation
- (iii) Any other business.

So far as is known tonight, decisions will only be needed under (ii). But they will be conditioned by (i).

2. Diplomatic situation. The Foreign Secretary, should report. The main points are clearly

- how are Mr. Haig's talks going?
- when is he likely to come to London?
- UN possibilities (Mr Fall's letter to Mr Coles of 18 April).

3. Military situation. The Defence Secretary should report. There are three areas for immediate decision:

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(a) Vulcans. Should they be authorised to start conventional bombing practice in Scotland? This was taken as read by the Sub-Committee at their last meeting (OD(SA)(82)8th meeting, Friday 16 April). But the decision will not be irreversible until after tomorrow's meeting. Today's publicity, centering on Mr. Churchill's article, has not revealed the Scotland plan; but if implemented it would immediately become public. The Foreign Secretary may want to reopen this, since it will immediately provoke speculation of what real targets we are thinking of bombing (e.g. the Argentine mainland, or Stanley airfield).

(b) Rules of Engagement. The Defence Secretary's minute to you of 17 April (MO5/21) makes three proposals for immediate implementation:

/ - Our submarines

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- Our submarines in the Falklands MEZ should be allowed to attack warships and naval auxiliaries; only warships were authorised at your meeting last night (Mr Coles' minute to Mr Omand of 17 April). Mr. Nott may not wish to press this point. There is at least one naval auxiliary inside the MEZ, which when last heard of was in a Falklands port but has emerged once and could do so again.
- We should immediately announce that we will deal appropriately with any Argentine forces which attempt to interfere with our forces anywhere in the South Atlantic. This would add nothing of substance but could have declaratory value.
- We should authorise for all our forces outside the MEZ the "stage A" (high seas) Rules of Engagement which the Sub-Committee approved on 16 April for our fast group heading for South Georgia (OD(SA)(82)13, Annex A). This is likely to be agreed without difficulty.

The Sub-Committee will need to take a view on each of these proposals.

(c) The South George operation. The only decisions essential tomorrow are:

- Should the fast group cross into the Argentine "Defence Zone" of 200 nautical miles round South Georgia (which they will do on 20 April unless instructed otherwise)?
- If so, is it confirmed that they should then operate under the "stage B" Rules of Engagement conditionally approved by the Sub-Committee on 16 April (OD(SA)(82)13, Annex B)? The Chief of the Defence Staff would probably be content for them to continue to operate only "stage A" Rules, if Ministers so wished.

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4. There are other South Georgia decisions coming up soon, but they do not need taking tomorrow. E.G.:

- May the group actually seize South Georgia (under "stage C" Rules of Engagement)? The Foreign Secretary may argue ~~that~~ this would endanger Mr. Haig's negotiations. A decision will be needed on 20 April.

- If seizure is to be delayed (eg while Mr. Haig remains in orbit), may they begin covert reconnaissance of South George? The Chief of Defence Staff would favour this, on both operational and morale grounds.

- If seizure is to be delayed while Mr. Haig is negotiating, should it also be delayed during any subsequent United Nations phase? The Foreign Secretary may regard that as less necessary.

5. Other business. You will need to agree to meet on 20 April.

R.L.G.

R.L. WADE-GERY
CABINET OFFICE

18 April 1982

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