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MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
CHIEFS OF STAFF COMMITTEE

CONFIDENTIAL ANNEX
TO
COS 2ND MEETING/82 HELD ON
FRIDAY 2 APRIL 1982 AT 3.10 PM

ALQ/050/1		
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ITEM 2. REPORT OF THE SITUATION IN THE FALKLAND ISLANDS

1. SIR MICHAEL BEETHAM (Acting Chief of the Defence Staff) invited SIR HENRY LEACH to update the Committee on the Ministerial meeting which he had just attended. SIR HENRY LEACH said that discussions had centred on the announcements which would be made in the House of Commons and to the Press. Continuing, he said that there was likely to be a full Cabinet meeting which, amongst other items, would probably address the question of ordering the sailing of the Task Force (1). It was also likely that Parliament would be recalled.
2. LIEUTENANT GENERAL GLOVER (Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff (Intelligence)) informed the meeting that the JIC were to produce an assessment within the next 24 hours. He explained they were faced with difficulties because there was inadequate cover over the operational area, the Argentine Naval forces had imposed an effective radio silence and communications with Port Stanley had been broken. The latest intelligence was from the Master of the RRS BRANSFIELD who reported that he had picked up a Falkland radio station broadcast that 200 Argentine Marines with Armoured Vehicles had landed and were moving toward Port Stanley. It also announced that three warships were anchored in the FORT WILLIAM area and that there had been considerable helicopter activity. No injuries to civilians or military personnel were reported. This intelligence had been complemented by a broadcast intercepted by HMS ENDURANCE which said that Government House had been surrounded before its radio link with the UK had been broken.
3. Continuing, LIEUTENANT GENERAL GLOVER (Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff (Intelligence)) said that the JIC had agreed to look at three specific areas in their assessment:
 - a. International Implications. This would include Soviet reaction, and the possibility of assistance from potential Allies, particularly Chile and to a lesser extent Brazil.

Note:

1. COS S12(1) OPERATION CORPORATE (Issue 2).
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COS S10(2)

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b. Argentine Domestic Scene. This would consider the internal strength of the Junta and the possibility of a protest against the current operation;

c. Military Capability. This would encompass the likely problems for the Argentine of sustaining a military presence in the Falkland Islands and their military potential against any UK Task Force.

4. AIR COMMODORE ASHFORD (Air Commodore Intelligence) was then asked by the Committee to update them on the Argentine military capability. He explained that:

a. Army. High conscript numbers created a relatively weak army, but equipment had improved significantly over the last 5 years;

b. Navy. Although it included 30% conscripts, it was an effective sea going force but it had some limitations with sophisticated weapons, both in tactical handling and serviceability.

c. Marines. A well-trained force of 8,000 despite high conscript numbers.

d. Airforces. Little was known; there were only 3 major airfields; land based aircraft ranges were limited; but a worry was the possible recent purchase of EXOCET missiles with which its SUPER ETENDAND were likely to be armed.

5. Concluding LIEUTENANT GENERAL GLOVER, (Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff (Intelligence)) said that it was difficult to determine the overall military effectiveness of the Argentine force on the scant evidence available. However it was his considered judgement that neither the maritime nor the air threat was such that it should put our Task Force at serious risk when at distance from mainland Argentina, ie East of the Falklands.

ITEM 3. OPERATION CORPORATE

6. BRIGADIER GOODSON (Acting Assistant Chief of the Defence Staff (Operations)) informed the Committee (1) of the actions which had been set in train for OPERATION CORPORATE and of a number of military options which were being urgently examined. REAR ADMIRAL WHETSTONE (Assistant Chief of the Naval Staff (Operations)) said that:

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a. HMS ENDURANCE. The ice patrol ship HMS ENDURANCE had been sent back to South Georgia to give what assistance she could to the Royal Marine detachment at Grytviken and to establish communication facilities. Her captain had been given discretion in offering assistance to the Royal Marine shore party but was invited to bear in mind the potential of the Argentine corvette armed with EXOCET. ENDURANCE had no RAS capability and currently held 23 days fuel and 15 days normal victuals.

b. RFA's FORT AUSTIN and APPLELEAF. Both RFAs would continue South, however they would be held well North of the area which Argentine ships could threaten and would await the arrival of the main Task Force before proceeding further into the South Atlantic.

c. Long Term Logistics. The maintenance of a Task Force in the South Atlantic would create a requirement for the Navy Department to take up bulk tankers from Trade. The Navy Department was also examining the reactivation and restoring of RFA STROMNESS (a stores support ship), and also the retention of RFA TIDEPOOL (fleet tanker) which was shortly to be handed over to the the Chilean Navy.

7. Concluding, SIR HENRY LEACH said that the quoted date - 6 April 1982 - for the sailing of the Task Force had certain flexibility. It was possible to sail all but 2 units on 5 April 1982. The 2 ships could then leave UK 24 hours later but catch up the main force during the passage South.

ITEM 4. FORECAST OF DECISIONS REQUIRED

8. In discussion the following points were agreed:
- a. Advice to Ministers on Rules of Engagement for the SSNs was required and on their likely employment on arrival off the Falkland Islands.
 - b. Directives for the Force Commander and the Commander 3 Cdo Bde would need to be agreed by Ministers.
 - c. Instructions for RFA FORT AUSTIN would be required in due course.
 - d. The FCO would need to decide what position we are legally in, ie are we at war with the Argentine or in a state of belligerence?

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e. Advice to Ministers on the evacuation of British nationals from Argentina could be necessary.

f. In conjunction with JIC advice, we would need to explore what military options the Argentine might take during the long period before we are able to get our own main forces into the area (27 April 1982).

ITEM 5. CHILEAN OPTION

9. The Chiefs of Staff discussed the use of air bases in South America and agreed that it would be necessary for the FCO to obtain clearance for the use of airfields in Chile if it was intended to deploy RAF aircraft within operational range of the Falkland Islands. It was stressed that NIMROD, in particular, would be invaluable on surveillance tasks before the SSNs arrived and would thereafter increase the operational effectiveness of both the SSNs and the Task Force. NIMROD deployment offered presentational advantages as its attack capability could be minimised.

ITEM 6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

10. The Chiefs of Staff agreed that Ministerial approval should be obtained to allow six accredited journalists to embark with the Task Force. They would wish to invite the Deputy Chief of Public Relations to take the appropriate action. The Chiefs of Staff further agreed that their Committee should be at 1½ hours notice for meetings and that meetings would take place each day until further notice.

11. Summing up SIR MICHAEL BEETHAM said that they would wish to instruct the Assistant Chief of the Defence Staff (Operations), in conjunction with single Service departments and the Defence Secretariat to take account of their discussion and instructions in developing further plans for OPERATION CORPORATE.

12. The Committee agreed with the remarks of the Acting Chief of the Defence Staff in his summing up.