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CABINET

DEFENCE AND OVERSEAS POLICY (OFFICIAL) COMMITTEE  
SUB-COMMITTEE ON THE SOUTH ATLANTIC AND THE FALKLAND ISLANDS

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INTERNATIONAL REACTION TO THE ARGENTINE INVASION  
OF THE FALKLAND ISLANDS

Note by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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General

1. As of 6 pm on 14 April the situation was as follows. Widespread concern at the situation continued to be expressed around the world. In general, the importance of not resorting to force has tended to be given greater prominence than condemnation of Argentinian aggression or support for our/Argentine position on sovereignty.

2. Early uncertain US reactions have become more favourable to the UK. The US privately point out that they must not antagonise Argentina if they are to retain influence as mediators, but they have assured us that no further arms deliveries will be made to Argentina. The American press and opinion in Congress have been very supportive. The Soviet Union is now noticeably leaning towards Argentina and has spoken of our illegal occupation of the Islands in 1833. The Soviet press has gone further and taken a clear anti-British

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line, explicitly associating the US with the UK position. In the week following the Argentinian invasion, the Soviet Union concluded 4 agreements with Argentina including one on the enrichment of nuclear fuel. The Soviet Union, moreover, now appears to be undertaking a surveillance role on behalf of Argentina in the South Atlantic.

3. Our European partners have followed up their joint statement condemning the invasion with a decision to impose an import ban on Argentina, the modalities of which were agreed in Brussels yesterday. Of our European partners the FRG's role has been particularly impressive. In addition to their unilateral ban on arms exports, the Germans have imposed a ban on new export credits. They have, however, made it clear, privately, that they very much want to see a peaceful solution. The weakest support has come from Ireland. A member of the Irish delegation to the UN has said that his mission saw Resolution 502 as applying as much to any British retaliatory action against Argentina as the Argentinian invasion. But the Irish may be hankering after a peace-making role. Of other Western European States the Spanish alone have announced their support for the Argentinian claim to sovereignty, although they oppose the use of force. Finland, Portugal, Norway, Turkey, Sweden and Austria have expressed support for Resolution 502. The Austrians have suspended delivery of tanks to Argentina and Switzerland has imposed an arms embargo both on Argentina and ourselves. It seems that the Nordic countries may be preparing a peace initiative.

4. Most Latin American States support the Argentinian claim to sovereignty, but support for Argentina has continued to be less than solid and it is not sure that Argentina would be able to muster the two-third majority necessary to invoke action within the framework of the Inter American Mutual Defence Treaty of 1947 (the Rio Treaty). The Chileans especially are disposed to

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be as helpful as they can to the UK behind the scenes, but there is an ambivalent Chilean public opinion. The leading opposition to the British case has come from Panama and Venezuela. Vociferous support for Argentina has also come from Guatemala, who have said that Guatemala was prepared to support Argentina if the Rio Treaty of 1947 was invoked. The Guatemalans see a clear connection between the Falkland issue and the Guatemalan claim to Belize, and will be watching events closely. British use of force could change the position of some of the more moderate Latin American States. Bolivia has said that British use of force to recover the Falklands would be considered to be an aggression against Latin America as defined under the Rio Treaty. The head of the Bolivian Air Force has announced the transfer of Bolivian fighter planes to the frontier with Argentina "for use if the need arose". Costa Rica has expressed grave concern in the Permanent Council of the Organisation of American States (OAS) that a "warlike fleet" should be heading for Latin America. More helpful behind the scene positions have been adopted by Mexico (genuinely sympathetic to us), Brazil, Peru and Colombia. Peru has proposed a 72 hour truce. Moderate Latin American opinion was probably summarised in the resolution adopted by the OAS Permanent Council on 13 April:

- a) profound concern over situation
- b) hope for rapid peaceful solution according to international law
- c) OAS cooperation in the peace efforts already under way.

On 9 April Brazilian jets forced down a Cuban Ilyushin aircraft flying without permission over Brazil, which contained sophisticated electronic and photographic equipment, and the Cuban Ambassador returning to Buenos Aires after a long absence.

5. In addition to the EC, support for our position has been led by the Commonwealth, particularly the old Commonwealth, and

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Caribbean, Pacific and African members and Singapore. New Zealand has broken diplomatic relations with Argentina and banned all trade with Argentina. Canada and Australia have imposed an import ban on Argentina and ended credit cover for new export transactions. Australia and Canada have recalled their Ambassadors. India's position is guarded. While critical of Argentina's use of force, she has appealed for a peaceful solution to the problem, basing her position on the New Delhi Declaration of February 1981 of the Non-Aligned Foreign Ministers Conference urging that bilateral negotiations be speeded up. An element in the supportive attitude of Black African States may be the links they perceive between Argentina and South Africa.

6. Among non-Commonwealth, non-European countries, 3 (Jordan, Togo and Zaire) were among the non-aligned countries which voted for SCR 502. A number of countries (Nepal, Bahrain, Syria and Pakistan) have expressed public support for Resolution 502. Among countries that have stressed the need for a peaceful solution alone are the ASEAN States, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand. China has not gone beyond the explanation of her abstention in the Security Council on 3 April and supports a peaceful settlement. Vietnam appears to support Argentina's claim to sovereignty. Algeria has been unhelpful in making a call for the 'decolonisation' of the Falklands. The Japanese are adopting their usual low-profile position on any controversial issue but have said they support a peaceful settlement; they are believed to be influenced by the US position.

#### Arms Embargos

7. The US, Canada, Austria, Switzerland and all EC States have imposed arms embargos on Argentina. Some countries like Sweden may have them already. Switzerland has said it will sell arms to neither side.

/Trade

#### Trade Sanctions

8. Canada and Australia have banned imports from Argentina and ended export credit cover for exports and New Zealand has banned all trade. The European Community has imposed an import ban on Argentina. The Danes have expressed interest in stopping export credits. The Belgium Presidency have informed Japan, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and certain other countries, and invited them to take similar action.

#### Other Measures

9. New Zealand has broken off diplomatic relations. Papua New Guinea has threatened to. Belgium, Canada and Australia have recalled their Ambassadors for consultations. Canada has cancelled some official military visits. New Zealand has forbidden Argentine civil aircraft to land.

10. A number of countries have pointed out in response to British lobbying that their relations with Argentina are not sufficiently substantial for them to take effective measures against her.