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OD(SA)(82) 3rd Meeting

CABINET

DEFENCE AND OVERSEA POLICY COMMITTEE

SUB-COMMITTEE ON THE SOUTH ATLANTIC AND
THE FALKLAND ISLANDS

MINUTES of a Meeting held at
10 Downing Street on
THURSDAY 8 APRIL 1982 at 11.00 am

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 Francis Pym MP
Secretary of State for
Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs

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

ALSO PRESENT

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

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) 2nd Meeting

The Sub-Committee had before them a note by the Secretaries (OD(SA)(82) 5) setting out draft Rules of Engagement for British submarines in the crisis area; and a minute of 8 April to the Prime Minister from the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary (PM/82/26) about nuclear weapons on board ships of the Task Force for Operation Corporate.

THE PRIME MINISTER, summing up the discussion, said that the proposed Rules of Engagement were acceptable. The commanding officer of a submarine would naturally have the right to exercise his discretion in any matter relating to the safety of his vessel. The Sub-Committee sympathised with the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary's proposal

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In their meetings with the United States Secretary of State, Mr Haig, that evening, she and the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and the Defence Secretary would make clear that the immediate requirement was for Argentine troops to leave the Falkland Islands and for British administration to be restored; thereafter, Britain would be willing to resume negotiations with Argentina; but she would be guided by the wishes of the islanders, which could clearly not be ascertained in present circumstances. Further thought would need to be given to the diplomatic and political options which might be possible in the future; and she would consider, in consultation with the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, whether a full-time Special Adviser should be temporarily appointed for this purpose.

The Sub-Committee -

1. Approved the Rules of Engagement for British submarines proposed in OD(SA)(82) 5.
2. Took note with approval of the approach suggested by the Prime Minister for the forthcoming discussions with the United States Secretary of State.
- 3.

Cabinet Office
8 April 1982

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