

ALQ 050/1
- 6 MAY 1962

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Mr. Weston
Defence Dept.

CHIEFS OF STAFF MEETING: 14 APRIL

The following points of interest to the FCO arose at this morning's meeting of the Chiefs of Staff, at which Mr. Nott and Mr. Blaker were present for part of the time.

(a) Intelligence Assessment. DCDS(I) confirmed that there had been no reports since yesterday affecting the current assessment of Argentine shipping within the maritime Exclusive Zone. The exact position of the Argentine frigate, Granville, is still uncertain, but there is one report that she may be making for a home port.

There was also some discussion about reports of Mirages on the Port Stanley airfield, which the military experts are at present tending to discount, on the grounds that the airfield is not yet long enough to take Mirages.

(b) Public Relations. Mr. Nott asked for guidance on what he should say if questioned about the presence of Nimrods on Ascension Island. The Chief of the Air Staff said that the facts were that Nimrods could only give surveillance coverage at a range of 1500 miles, although they could drop supplies to a range of 1800 miles. The conclusion of the meeting was that Mr. Nott should confirm, if asked, that Nimrods were on Ascension Island "co-operating with the Task Group".

There was also some discussion of today's press reports on Soviet intelligence assistance to Argentina. The conclusion of the discussion was that we should aim to play down Soviet capabilities (our assessment is that these have been deliberately exaggerated by the Argentine disinformation machine), but that Soviet involvement with Argentina should not be played down. This is, I think, in line with the agreement reached with HM Ambassador in Washington, and I have made arrangements for the telegrams on this subject to be copied to the relevant people in the MOD.

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(c) Staff Training for the Argentine Armed Forces. In the course of a presentation on the Argentine forces in the Falkland Islands, it was alleged that most of the senior Argentine officers had attended Staff College in the United States. This was disputed by the Chief of Air Staff who thought that this had not been the case for several years. I should be grateful if this point could be checked with Mr. Anthony Williams, in case he has any information to offer.

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(d) Amphibious operations against the Falkland Islands. There was then a long discussion of the Military Appreciation for amphibious operations against the Falkland Islands (on which you have already minuted). As a result of this morning's discussion, there will be

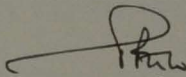
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some further redrafting, but the aim is to clear the final draft out of committee by 1800 today. I supported Sir F. Cooper's suggestion that the Appreciation should include a reference to the uncertainty of developments between now and the earliest possible time for the operation, as well as his suggestion that the paper should indicate how long the Task Force Commander might be able to hold off or delay a landing without resupply and logistic difficulties. The Chief of Naval Staff said that the most difficult problems would arise if the Force were required to stand off the Falkland Islands for long; resupply difficulties would be much less if the Force were ordered to return to Ascension. Since the Appreciation has been agreed, the Ministry of Defence propose to submit to their Ministers, with an abbreviated version of the Appreciation, covering the Aim and Conclusions, drawing particular attention to the timing problems. The Chiefs of Staff will then initiate a further study of options as intelligence and the political situation develop. The Chief of General Staff put up a warning this morning that there might be a need to requisition further ships, if it was concluded that a further brigade would be required for the operation.

(e) CDS contact with NATO colleagues. At the end of the meeting the Chief of the Defence Staff suggested that he might write to his opposite numbers in NATO letting them know what we were doing. I said that we would certainly support such an idea, but asked that we should be fully consulted, since it was important not to get out of line with what Sir J. Graham was saying in the North Atlantic Council. The CDS agreed, and said that any drafts would be cleared with us through DS 11.



(P.R.H. Wright)
14 April, 1982.

cc PS
PS/Mr. Onslow
PS/FUS
Mr. Giffard
Mr. Ure
Mr. Gillmore
Mr. Fearn
Mr. Fenn

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