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OD(SA)(82) 12th Meeting

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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
TUESDAY 20 APRIL 1982 at 6.30 pm

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

THE FOLLOWING WERE ALSO PRESENT

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

Admiral Sir Henry Leach
Chief of Naval Staff

Sir Antony Acland
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Sir Michael Palliser
Cabinet Office

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) 11th Meeting

THE PRIME MINISTER, summing up the discussion, said that Her Majesty's Ambassador in Washington had been consulted in strict confidence about the implementation of Operation Paraquet for the repossession of South Georgia. He had reported that it was unlikely to be opposed by American public or Congressional opinion or by the United States Government, although the Secretary of State, Mr Haig, might feel it necessary to express concern at the further resort to force while talks were proceeding. There appeared to be no grounds for the Sub-Committee altering their earlier decision that the Operation should go ahead, with the first reconnaissance landing being made at about 0600 GMT on 21 April. It was understood that this decision would now become irreversible, although it might still be several days before the main Operation was actually carried out. Her Majesty's Ambassador in Washington had strongly urged that Mr Haig should be given advance warning of the Operation. This should be done as soon as possible after his office opened for business on 21 April. Since this would not be before 1200 GMT, there would be no possibility of suspending action at that stage. But Mr Haig should not be given details of the time factors involved, since these were unpredictable and would depend on decisions by the local commander. The Sub-Committee would meet the following day, in the Defence Secretary's unavoidable absence, to consider counter-proposals on the draft Anglo-Argentine agreement which the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary might make when he saw Mr Haig in Washington on 22 April. At the Defence Secretary's suggestion, early arrangements should also be made for the Sub-Committee to be given a further detailed appreciation of the general military situation and prospects.

The Sub-Committee -

1. Invited the Defence Secretary to put into effect Operation Paraquet for the early repossession of South Georgia.
2. Invited the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary to arrange for Mr Haig to be informed about Operation Paraquet early in working hours (Washington time) on 21 April.

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3. Agreed to resume their discussion at 0930 on 21 April.
4. Invited the Defence Secretary to arrange for the Chiefs of Staff to give the members of the Sub-Committee at 0900 on 22 April an appreciation of the military situation and prospects.

Cabinet Office

21 April 1982

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