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cc RT. (2)  
B1

Prime Minister

To note.

MO 5/21

*1 March 702*

A.S.C 3/3

Copy: *Mr. Dicklett*

PRIME MINISTER

*imported meat will  
just not be consumed*

FOOD PROVISION FOR THE FALKLAND ISLANDS GARRISON

I gather that, after OD on 24th February you spoke to CDS about the provision of food for the Falkland Islands Garrison. CDS has now made a full report to me and I believe that you will wish to be aware of his conclusions, which I endorse.

2. So far as supplies from Argentina are concerned no purchases of food have been made since the embargo was imposed during the Falklands campaign. However there are stocks of Argentine beef in the Armed Forces food supply system which were obtained before the start of the Falklands campaign. The beef is of three types as follows:

a. Chilled Beef: stocks in the UK of chilled beef amount to approximately 24,000 lbs (value approximately £24,000); further stocks in ships and en route to the Falkland Islands amount to approximately 12,000 lbs (£12,000);

b. Tinned Corned Beef: approximately 21 tons of tinned corned beef is in food depots and in the supply system, primarily for use on HM Ships; the replacement value is approximately £35,000;

c. Operational Ration Packs: tinned Argentine corned beef in 12 oz tins is contained in one of the varieties of the 10 man and 4 man operational ration packs ("compo rations") - which are held in reserves in UK and worldwide, including the Falkland Islands.



There are approximately 120 tons in 4 million packs.  
This represents upwards of 5 years usage, the rations  
having a life of 3 to 5 years.

I have considered whether these stocks should be withdrawn and replaced. However the costs would be considerable. There would also be a substantial lead time before replacement stocks were actually in use, particularly in the case of the Falkland Islands because of the sailing time involved. The substitution of all the 12 oz tins of Argentine corned beef among some 4 million ration packs distributed worldwide would be an even larger problem, involving the costly and manpower intensive task of breaking down each pack that needed to be changed. For these reasons I believe that a ban on consumption of stocks of Argentine beef procured before the conflict began would not be desirable.

3. You were also concerned with the question of the supply of other foreign food to the British Forces, particularly Danish bacon. Our general policy is that MOD food procurement is the subject of competition from UK firms and is of British origin whenever possible, subject to availability, value for money and certain international treaty obligations. So far as Danish bacon is concerned the specification for Service bacon is for "Wiltshire cured", not British bacon. However the Danish Bacon Company, a British Limited Company, satisfies this requirement using only British pigs. Service stocks of "Danish bacon" are therefore of British origin.

4. In order to ascertain the extent of foreign supply we have examined the origin of two cargoes of food currently on route to the Falkland Islands and sufficient to last the Garrison and HM Ships approximately 3 months. The proportions of UK and imported food are approximately as follows:



	<u>UK</u>	<u>Imported</u>
a. Meat	30%	70%
b. Tinned Meat	100% (except corned beef)	
c. Vegetables	100%	
d. Fresh Vegetables in Season	90%	10%
e. Fruit		
(1) Home Grown	100%	
(2) Pineapples, Peaches, Tomatoes		100%
f. Milk	100%	

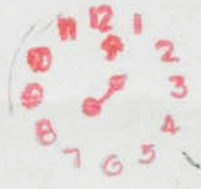
These figures would seem to me to reveal a balance between UK and imported food which is not out of line with the economy as a whole.

*WJH*

Ministry of Defence  
3rd March 1983



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file  
cc Roger Jackling

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

7 March 1983

Food Provision for the  
Falkland Islands Garrison

The Prime Minister has seen your Secretary of State's minute dated 3 March describing the sources of supply for the food for the Falkland Islands Garrison.

Mrs. Thatcher was grateful for this information but has commented that she fears that the fact that 70% of the meat provided for the Garrison appears to come from foreign sources will give rise to comment.

A.J. COLES

Richard Mottram, Esq.,  
Ministry of Defence

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