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**RESTRICTED**

SAPU(82) 3

Prime Minister

This now appears at  
least daily.

VR 15/4

SOUTH ATLANTIC PRESENTATION UNIT (SAPU)

The attached paper, issued at 1500 hours on 15 April 1982, contains  
recommended lines for Ministers to take on the Falkland Islands.

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VR 16/4



Cabinet Office

15 April 1982

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15 April 1952

LINE TO TAKE

1. United States attitudes

- Remain very grateful for Mr Haig's intensive efforts to find a just settlement. His role is crucial. In this context it is quite reasonable that the United States should maintain an evenhanded position in public. There is no doubt that the Americans are fully aware of the true principles and interests at stake.

Specific questions

United States giving us intelligence? (Mr Haig's statement of 14 April)

- We never comment on such questions. Mr Haig's reference to 'customary patterns of co-operation' is of course to the customary patterns of co-operation between allies. (Similarly, decline to comment on specific points on co-operation on re-fuelling, communications, weather forecasting etc.)

2. Further United Kingdom military preparations

- Still hoping for a diplomatic solution but must be prepared for military action. This means we must be capable of sustaining our forces for extended periods of time if necessary, at a great distance from base. Measures we are now taking enable us to do that and will extend our range of military options.

Specific questions

Argentines stronger than we thought?

- No. Having despatched our initial task force we are now making the arrangements to sustain and increase its options.

A prolonged blockade rather than a landing?

- Not necessarily. Wrong to comment on the military options. We are giving ourselves the widest range of possibilities. We must think ahead given difficulties of an operation 8,000 miles away.

HMS Intrepid was to be scrapped?

- No. Decision to retain her announced earlier this year.

Why charter minesweepers?

- To enhance the task force capability. These vessels especially suitable for South Atlantic.

Suitability of RAF/RN Harriers at sea?

- Importance of sustaining aircover to the task force. Fully confident of RAF/RN Harriers ability for the job.

Extra troops with Intrepid?

- Cannot comment on such details.

Are you planning further measures? (eg speeding up entry into service of HMS Illustrious)

- Of course we are looking at all ways of increasing effectiveness of our forces in the South Atlantic. Will no doubt be further measures. Cannot go into details.

Is the task force still steaming south?

- Yes. It is on course and on time.

Difficulties with HMS Hermes?

- These have been denied by the First Sea Lord. Hermes is still with the task force which is proceeding on time.

3. Is support hardening for Argentina from other countries in this region?

- A few Latin American countries have indicated support for Argentina, some for transparent reasons of their own. But, on 13 April the Organisation of American States conspicuously failed to endorse the Argentine invasion. It called for a peaceful solution of the problem within the context of international law (of which of course the Argentines are in flagrant breach in all respects including their refusal to conform with mandatory terms of Security Resolution 502). Many countries, particularly in the Caribbean, are emphasising that the principles of the non-use of force and of self determination must not be compromised.

4. Are the Argentines entitled to invoke military support from other American states under the Rio Treaty?

- They may try. But the Treaty provides that assistance be given in the event of 'an armed attack by any state against an American state', and this has not taken place; on the contrary there has been an armed attack on British territory and our sole purpose is to secure the withdrawal of Argentine forces from that territory. The Treaty furthermore states that "invasion affecting a region which is under the effective jurisdiction of another state shall be considered as aggression" there thus being no doubt that the Argentines are defined as aggressors in the terms of the Treaty.

5. Future action at the Security Council

- Not excluded. But the first priority is the implementation of Security Council Resolution 502.

Specific questions

The Argentines' latest position at the UN - that they will withdraw troops as required in Security Council Resolution 502 if we cease 'hostilities' (ie turn the task force round) - is spurious. Security Council Resolution 502 must be read as a whole; the measures mandated were based explicitly on the breach of the peace which resulted from the Argentine invasion. Since then the Argentines have continued to build up forces in the Falklands and invaded South Georgia, in flagrant disregard of the mandatory terms of the Resolution. Britain will continue to take whatever measures may be needed in exercise of its inherent right of self-defence under article 51 of the UN Charter.