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SAPU(82) 5

SOUTH ATLANTIC PRESENTATION UNIT (SAPU)

1. The attached paper containing suggested lines for Ministers to take on the Falkland Islands was issued at 1930 hours on 20 April 1982.
2. The material on current negotiations draws on the Prime Minister's answers in the Commons today.
3. Although allegations of 'pay cuts' for those in the Task Force have been refuted in detail by the MOD, some sections of the press have persisted in misrepresenting the Government's action as 'penny-pinching' and the attached line to take emphasises that this is not the case.

Cabinet Office

20 April 1982

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1. The Haig Mission

Mr Haig forwarded Argentine proposals which fall far short of our requirements in important respects, particularly in as far as they fail to meet the requirement that the wishes of the Islanders should be paramount. This is a stage in the negotiating process which must be continued and we are examining the proposals very closely. We shall put forward our own proposals and Mr Pym is to travel to Washington on Thursday. Remain committed to diplomatic solution if possible. But Argentines should be in no doubt of our capacity and determination to achieve our objectives.

With time so short why is Mr Pym not going to Washington before Thursday?

- As he explained when leaving No 10 last night the Argentine proposals are complex and difficult and as the Prime Minister told the House this afternoon we are formulating our own proposals. It was not therefore practicable to travel to the United States before Thursday.

2. A Role for the UN?

The purpose of current negotiations is to find a solution on the basis of Security Council Resolution 502. We are still involved with negotiations through Mr Haig, and should not risk crossing wires at this stage. Our military build-up is full in accordance with the right of self-defence provided for in Article 51 of the UN Charter.

3. US Sitting on Fence?

Remain most grateful for Mr Haig's tireless efforts. It is essential that he retains credibility with the Argentines. United States public opinion on the issues involved is quite clear and we remain in no doubt that the United States administration are equally aware of the principles and vital interests at stake in the wake of Argentine aggression.

4. Argentine Calling of OAS Meeting in Washington

It is natural that the OAS should meet. They have already adopted a resolution which conspicuously does not endorse Argentine actions; the Foreign Secretary has sent a message welcoming this. In any event OAS is a regional agency with observe status at the UN; mandatory resolutions of the Security Council (ie SCR 502) would take precedence over OAS resolutions. Member states of the Rio Treaty cannot be obliged to take military action on behalf of another member state particularly if that member state is the aggressor - there is no doubt that the Argentines are defined as aggressors in terms of the Treaty. Signatories of the Treaty undertake not to resort to the threat or use of force in any manner inconsistent with provisions of the UN Charter.

5. International Red Cross

The IRC has informed us that Argentines have refused their request to send a delegation to the Falkland Islands to provide humanitarian assistance. We remain in touch with the ICRC.

6. Local Overseas Allowance for Task Force: Allegations of 'Wiserly' MOD

LOA is not pay. It is non-taxable additional allowance intended to compensate for higher costs of living overseas. On normal peacetime naval deployments it is based on costs at each post of call. This is not a normal deployment and there will be no shore leave. As most ships will not call at any port they would not be entitled to LOA in any case. Unfair that some ships should get an allowance not available to most of the task force so the Government has decided instead to pay everyone in the Task Force £1.00 per day.

Specific Questions

Penny-pinching?

- No. This will cost more in total than a literal interpretation of peacetime regulations.

But HMS Invincible's allowance has been cut?

- Not really. They jumped the gun slightly and assumed that peacetime rules would apply even though circumstances are very different and there will be no shore leave.

Will troops get the £1 allowance?

- Yes. It is only fair, although under normal rules they would not get LOA.