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FIRC 8TH MEETING MINUTES

FALKLAND ISLANDS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting held on Monday 11, Thursday 14 and Friday 15 October 1982 in Room 1/95 Old Admiralty Building

Present: Lord Franks (Chairman)
Lord Barber
Sir Patrick Nairne
Mr Rees
Lord Watkinson
Lord Lever of Manchester

Mr Rawsthorne)
Mr Moulson) Secretariat

Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting were approved.

Matters arising

2. The Chairman said that the Cabinet Office had been asked to look into Lord Carrington's remark that he would be surprised if he had not reported to the Cabinet following the talks in New York at the end of February. The Cabinet Office said that if the Foreign Secretary reported to the Cabinet on a significant matter such as the outcome of an international meeting or negotiations, that would invariably be recorded in the minutes. There was in fact no record of such a report. If the substance was considered too sensitive for the normal circulation, the substantive record would take the form of a limited circulation annex, but the main minutes would contain a reference to the subject and to the fact that the discussion was recorded separately.

3. The Secretary reported that so far only one substantive reply to the letter to newspaper editors had been received. That had been from the Editor of the Daily Telegraph who said that he had no evidence to give the Committee but he

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had sent a correspondent to Southern Argentina on 29 March in the light of the South Georgia incident.

4. The Secretary reported that the Editor of ITN had agreed to come to talk to the Committee but that as he would be away until November he had suggested that his deputy, Mr Peter Thornton, the Editor of IRN, should come in his place. The Committee agreed to this.

5. Papers from the MOD on the Port Stanley airfield and on defence sales were circulated.

Oral evidence

6. The Committee considered questions for Mr Callaghan, Dr Owen and Mr Rowlands on 18 October, for Captain Barker, the Defence Attaches and the Cabinet Office on 19 October and for the Prime Minister on 25 October.

7. The Committee decided that it would not need to take evidence from Lord Home, Mr Healey or Captain Carlisle and decided not to invite particular journalists to give evidence in addition to the general invitation issued to editors.

8. The Committee took oral evidence from the intelligence agencies, the Joint Intelligence Committee, Sir Michael Palliser and Ministry of Defence officials (Sir Frank Cooper, Admiral Sir John Fieldhouse, Admiral Sir Henry Leach, Mr R Jackling, Mr N H Nicholls). Summaries are attached.

Draft Report

9. The Committee (Lord Lever was absent) had a general discussion about the form and structure of the draft Report. The Chairman said that he thought that there were some issues on which the Committee could probably agree. The evidence seemed clear that the Argentine decision to invade was made on or near 1 April; that the invasion force did not sail until 28 or 29 March and that the Davidoff expedition, while perhaps not inspired by the Argentine Government, had provided the trigger for the invasion. There were, however, some points on which the Committee would need to clarify its thinking. The Committee was concerned about the lack of an updated JIC assessment between 9 July 1981 and the end of March 1982 and also about certain aspects of the JIC machinery. It would be necessary for the Committee to be clear on the grounds for making any criticism in its Report. The Committee was concerned about the fact that OD did not

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meet to consider the Falklands between 29 January 1981 and 1 April 1982 and was not prompted to do so despite the diminished credibility of the Government's negotiating position and the signs of increasing Argentine impatience. The Committee was also concerned about the possible relevance of the consideration given in 1977 to the deployment of ships in support of negotiations.

10. The Chairman invited Committee members to comment on this appraisal. They agreed with it subject to individual qualifications. Lord Barber said that he shared the concern about the JIC but doubted that a different JIC structure or more frequent threat assessments would have made a difference to the outcome in view of the acknowledged difficulties of dealing with the kind of surprise attack which took place on 2 April. Mr Rees said that he thought the Report should focus on the role and responsibility of Ministers as well as on officials and the machinery of Government and that the Committee should not be afraid to voice any criticism. Sir Patrick Nairne said that he thought the Report should set out answers to current criticism that the Government had had the means of predicting and deterring the invasion. He was not convinced that more frequent JIC reappraisals and an earlier meeting of OD would not have altered the way in which the Government had acted. He also doubted that the invasion could not have been avoided. Lord Watkinson said that he did not think it appropriate for the Report to specify weaknesses in the JIC structure since it was the Committee's job to report the facts rather than its own opinions. In his view the single point of significance about the JIC was that the intelligence community was insufficiently geared up to detect threats from low priority targets such as Argentina.

11. The Committee agreed to consider the draft Report at its meetings in the first and second weeks in November so that the first draft by the Secretary could be prepared by the beginning of December or, if possible, in time for the meeting on 29 November. If sufficient progress were made, the meetings from 15 to 22 November could be cancelled. The Committee would aim to iron out the draft Report in five working days with a view to submitting the Report to the Prime Minister before the end of the year. The publication of the Report would be a matter for the Prime Minister.

12. The Committee agreed that it would be undesirable for advance copies of the Report submitted to the Prime Minister to be sent to other Government Departments for checking what could be published because of the risks of leaks. One possibility would be to ask the Secretary of the Cabinet to look at it himself from this point of view.

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FALKLAND ISLANDS REVIEW COMMITTEE

13. The Committee also agreed that it might be useful to seek advice in due course from Sir Robert Armstrong about the treatment of sensitive material with which the Report would need to deal, for example, acknowledging the existence of the JIC.

October

Future meetings

14. The Committee agreed the attached programme of meetings in December (Annex A).

Next meeting

15. The next meeting of the Committee will be on 18, 19 and 22 October at 10.30 am in Room 1/95 Old Admiralty Building.

November

- Monday, 1
- Tuesday, 2
- Wednesday, 3 (not Sir Patrick Nairns)
- Monday, 8
- Thursday, 11
- Friday, 12
- Monday, 15
- Tuesday, 16
- Friday, 19
- Monday, 22
- Monday, 29
- Tuesday, 30

December

- Wednesday, 1
- Monday, 6
- Tuesday, 7
- Wednesday, 8
- Friday, 10
- Monday, 13
- Wednesday, 15
- Thursday, 16
- Friday, 17

FIRC
Old Admiralty Building
Whitehall
London
SW1A 2AZ

20 October 1982

FALKLAND ISLANDS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Programme of MeetingsOctober

Monday, 18
Tuesday, 19

Friday, 22

Monday, 25
Tuesday, 26
Wednesday, 27
Thursday, 28

November

Monday, 1
Tuesday, 2
Wednesday, 3 (not Sir Patrick Nairne)

Monday, 8
Thursday, 11
Friday, 12

Monday, 15
Tuesday, 16
Friday, 19

Monday, 22

Monday, 29
Tuesday, 30

December

Wednesday, 1

Monday, 6
Tuesday, 7
Wednesday, 8
Friday, 10

Monday, 13
Wednesday, 15
Thursday, 16
Friday, 17

Monday, 20
Tuesday, 21
Wednesday, 22
Thursday, 23



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SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE GIVEN BY THE JOINT INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE
ON MONDAY 11 OCTOBER 1982.

Present were Sir Robert Armstrong, Mr Patrick Wright, Sir Antony Duff, Mr R O'Neill and Captain Tod.

Responsibilities

Sir Antony Duff said that as Co-ordinator he was responsible for the overall functioning of the intelligence community. He was responsible to the Secretary to the Cabinet to whom he also gave advice on intelligence matters. He was also responsible for co-ordinating the requirements of the intelligence agencies for submission to the committee of Permanent Secretaries which decided such matters. Mr Wright said that as Chairman of the JIC he was responsible for the supervision of the Assessments Staff, with whom he had a weekly meeting, and for the preparation of papers for the same committee of Permanent Secretaries. As a Deputy Secretary in the FCO, he supervised the Permanent Secretary's Department (PUSD) which was responsible for liaison with the intelligence agencies. He also supervised the FCO departments responsible for defence, nuclear energy and arms control. Mr O'Neill said that as head of the Assessments Staff he was responsible for the preparation of papers for the JIC. Captain Tod said that he was the desk officer in the Assessments Staff responsible for Latin America and the Caribbean; his job was to monitor secret intelligence and publicly available information relevant to his area and draft any papers to be considered by the Current Intelligence Group (CIG), and the JIC. He was on secondment to the Assessments Staff from the Royal Navy and had been in post since January 1982.

Assessments Staff

2. Captain Tod said that between July 1981 and March 1982 there had been 18 meetings of the Latin America CIG. However, the CIG had been largely pre-occupied with other matters for most of this period. He had personally been concerned for most of this period with Belize and he estimated that only between 2 and 5 per cent of his time had been spent on issues relating to the Falkland Islands, which was his other main interest. He thought that the Falkland Islands had been discussed at the weekly assessments staff meeting on two occasions over the period.
3. Mr O'Neill said that it was usual for the Assessments Staff to review an assessment every two to three weeks and also in advance of any major reappraisal of policy. He thought that from December 1981 the need for a new Falkland Islands threat assessment had been considered 6 to 8 times.
4. Mr O'Neill said that it was usual for subjects to be discussed at the CIG meeting in response to requests for a new assessment by Ministers or Departments or as a result of the weekly meeting of the Assessments Staff.

5. Mr O'Neill said that the Assessments Staff considered it to be their job to follow both secret intelligence and publicly available information. For public information the Assessments Staff relied on the BBC's broadcast monitoring service, UK press reports, despatches from Embassies about local press comment and the Americans' "Foreign Broadcast Intercepts" Service. Captain Tod confirmed that he had regularly used all these sources as well as a range of other published material.

6. Asked whether the Assessments Staff took account of the possible influence of Government policies on the Argentina view of the British position, Sir Robert Armstrong explained that it was not considered to be the task of the Assessments Staff to comment on the implications of Government policies; this was the responsibility of the departments concerned. A department would not expect the JIC to prompt it to review the consequences of its policy but those consequences would normally be taken into account by the Assessments Staff.

The JIC Report of July 1981

7. Asked about paragraph 4 of the July Assessment, Mr O'Neill said that "forcible action" had meant both the economic and military measures. It had been intended that the life of the report, "over the next few months", should cover the period up to the next round of negotiations, which had been due to take place at the end of the year. In the event these negotiations had been postponed from December to February. There had not been an up-dated assessment before the end of March because no intelligence had been received which, in the minds of the Assessments Staff, had invalidated the conclusions of the July assessment. Captain Tod said that the conclusion that economic measures were more likely than military action had been based on intelligence reports in 1981 which had referred to: a reduction in LADE flights, the delay in the sailing of the sea service to teach the Falkland Islanders a lesson, and the Argentine Foreign Minister's advocacy of an economic blockade.

8. Sir Robert Armstrong said that the Assessments Staff considered updating the July assessment in November, in December and again in January after the arrival of President Galtieri's government, but had concluded, with FCO agreement, on each occasion that no new intelligence altered the substance of the July assessment. Captain Tod said that the January review had been between the 20th and 26th, when the Assessments Staff had been aware that the Argentines were about to issue their "bout de papier", but they had not seen it and had not been aware of the time limit which the "bout de papier" contained. Sir Robert Armstrong said that it had been agreed in January to have a new assessment after the February talks in preparation for the OD meeting which had been scheduled to take place on 16 March. However, the OD meeting slipped back to Easter and the new assessment slipped with it. Thereafter the need for a new assessment had been overtaken by events. In early March it had not appeared to those involved that there were any more pressing reasons to have a new assessment at that time instead of early April. Mr O'Neill said that there had been no intelligence that

the Argentines thought after the February talks that the British Government did not intend to negotiate seriously, nor any intelligence that the Argentines themselves would not continue to negotiate. The harder Argentine line after the February talks had been interpreted as meaning that the Argentines would put greater pressure on the British to agree to the setting up of the negotiating commission on their terms. Also, in order to produce the new threat assessment, it would have been necessary for the Assessments Staff to know what was the new negotiating position following the February talks, and this was delayed while the FCO considered a reply to the Argentine communique.

9. Captain Tod said that he had regularly reviewed the threat assessment in the light of what he regarded as the four main factors determining Argentine policy: the Beagle Channel dispute with Chile, the state of the Argentine economy, the rivalry between the Argentine armed forces and, most important, the Argentine perception of the British negotiating position. In 1982 he considered that the Argentines had regained the initiative from Chile in the Beagle Channel dispute and would therefore be under less pressure to balance that disappointment with a success in the Falkland Islands. He had considered that Argentina's economic position, while poor, was not unusually desperate. The armed services rivalry in the Galtieri government was less than it had been under the presidency of General Videla, largely because of the relationship between Galtieri and Anaya, and this had suggested a more stable government and consequently less risk of precipitate action. As far as the negotiating position was concerned, he had felt that the Argentines still had hopes of winning support among the Falkland Islanders. Also, the Junta had accepted a 12-month timetable for the negotiating commission and this was the line which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had been pursuing in negotiations. There was in addition intelligence that the Argentines would seek to apply diplomatic pressure before resorting to forcible measures. He therefore concluded in early March, although he had been at that time temporarily transferred to other duties, that there was no requirement for an immediate revision of the July assessment. If he had thought that the Argentines regarded the negotiations as having broken down he would have advised the preparation of contingency plans to meet aggressive action by the Argentines, since he thought it likely that in those circumstances the Argentines would by-pass the option of diplomatic pressure. He had, however, not seen the picture that way in early March. He had foreseen difficulties ahead but had considered that there had been no major change in any of the four main factors against which he had made his judgement. When asked about the Argentine communique following the February talks, Captain Tod said that there had been nothing in the communique to suggest that the Argentines would resort immediately to forcible measures; it was not unusual for statements made by South American governments to considerably overstate their demands, despite the fact that border disputes generally went on for many years. The references to action in June or July had come from relatively junior sources.

Contingency Plans

10. Mr Wright confirmed that the JIC had not seen the Prime Minister's instructions about contingency plans of 8 March. Sir Robert Armstrong said that the kind of contingency plans which the Prime Minister had in mind were concerned with taking action in response to possible Argentine measures, and were therefore a matter for the FCO and the MOD and not for the JIC.

Sir Michael said that he had been concerned about the Falkland Islands since he had known best of the FCO's Fleming...

He took a closer personal interest from December 1982 following Sir Hilary's appointment in the House of Commons. Since becoming Permanent Secretary at the FCO in 1973 he had instructed the Department to copy to him all significant memoranda to Ministers on international policy matters. He had therefore been made aware of all submissions to Ministers on the Falkland Islands. Although he had commented in writing on relatively few papers, he read them all, often commented orally, and took part in meetings of officials and with Ministers. He had therefore been fully in the picture and accepted full responsibility for the Department's role in policy making.

He had a close working relationship with the Secretary of State and would normally discuss the timing and content of his reports with him.

SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE GIVEN BY SIR MICHAEL PALLISER
ON THURSDAY 14 OCTOBER 1982

Handling of Falklands matters

Sir Michael said that he had been concerned about the Falkland Islands since he had become head of the FCO's Planning Staff in the early 1960s. It had always seemed to him an issue which was liable to give rise to political concern, and he had kept an eye on it.

2. He took a closer personal interest from December 1980 following Mr Ridley's difficulties in the House of Commons. Since becoming Permanent Secretary at the FCO in 1975 he had instructed the Department to copy to him all significant submissions to Ministers on economic and policy matters. He had therefore been sent copies of all submissions to Ministers on the Falkland Islands. Although he had commented in writing on relatively few papers, he read them all, often commented orally, and took part in meetings of officials and with Ministers. He had therefore been fully in the picture and accepted full responsibility for the Department's role in policy making.

3. He had a close working relationship with the Secretary to the Cabinet and would normally discuss the timing and agenda of OD meetings with him.

4. In answer to the question why OD had not considered the Falklands between January 1981 and 30 March 1982 Sir Michael said that it had been clear after the talks in February 1981 that the Government was headed for a difficult time over the Falklands. This had led to Mr Ure's visit to the Islands in the summer and subsequently to Mr Ridley's meeting with all the officials involved at the end of June, which he had also attended. He had, however, been in constant touch with Mr Ridley all through 1981. The June meeting had decided that OD should be confronted with its conclusions. This had led to a submission from Mr Ridley to Lord Carrington, who had held a meeting on 7 September. At that meeting Lord Carrington and the Lord Privy Seal had felt that it was not the right time to confront OD since Ministers were facing difficult decisions on other issues. The paper which might have been sent to OD was therefore converted into a minute from Lord Carrington to the Prime Minister which was submitted on 14 September. This minute had mentioned the need for contingency planning which had been set in train. Lord Carrington had then gone on to talks at the United Nations, where he had met the Argentine Foreign Minister, and he had returned from those talks believing that they had gone well. A further round of negotiations was being organised for December and Lord Carrington had sent a further minute to the Prime Minister in anticipation of those negotiations. The beginning of 1982 was marked by the new Government in Argentina. He had foreseen a difficult period ahead but there had been little sympathy at the time from other Government Departments for the

contingency planning exercise: the Treasury had been preoccupied with expenditure and the MOD had been very negative over HMS Endurance. He had felt at the time that other Government Departments would not be disposed to change their attitudes unless the situation with Argentina got worse. There had therefore seemed to be little point in an OD meeting in early 1982. The OD meeting arranged for March had to be postponed because of Ministers' absences abroad.

5. Sir Michael said that the FCO felt they had been "bounced" by the MOD over HMS Endurance, the decision about which had, in the context of defence cuts as a whole, gone through "on the nod". He had personally regarded it at the time as a very significant and dangerous signal to the Argentines given the symbolic importance of HMS Endurance in the South Atlantic, where she had been the only ship of the Royal Navy to regularly visit the Falkland Islands.

Contingency Planning

6. Sir Michael said that it would not have been possible to get any further with contingency planning beyond the paper being prepared for OD without the approval of Ministers for the expenditure which was implicit in the proposals. He had discussed contingency planning with the Prime Minister's Private Secretary on 26 February, when he had been told that the Prime Minister was concerned about the position and he had said at the time that the best move the Government could make would be to reverse the decision to withdraw HMS Endurance. He had felt that the Prime Minister's request for contingency planning on 8 March had been a little late. No attempt had been made to cost the defence options.

7. Sir Michael said that he did not agree that the only realistic military contingency plan for the Falklands was a full scale task force to recover the Islands since there had always been doubts about the likely success of such an operation. He thought therefore that a realistic options paper would have to have included other contingency preparations. He thought that if the intelligence had been firmer about Argentine military preparations after the February talks the Government might well have been advised about the option of sending the kind of naval task force which had been deployed in 1977 as a similar insurance behind the next round of negotiations. It had not however seemed to him at the time that either the intelligence or the publicly available information about Argentine intentions indicated that an invasion was possible.

Intelligence

8. Sir Michael Palliser said that he thought the Foreign Office and Ministers had been well served by the intelligence material. There were inevitable weaknesses in the collection of intelligence from Argentina because of the nature of the regime.

Although there had been criticism in the press it was in his view an illusion to suppose that the

quality of intelligence about military preparation in Argentina could have been improved.

9. Sir Michael said that he had received a regular flow of original CX and SIGINT material and therefore had not depended only on JIC reports. His impression was that the Ministers primarily responsible, Mr Ridley and Mr Luce, had also seen a lot of material which had been forwarded to them by officials. The Foreign Secretary saw rather less.

10. He had not been conscious of the gap between July 1981 and March 1982 in JIC assessments since he had been kept up to date with the original material. In his judgment the conclusions of the July assessment would not have been any different at any time over this period.

11. Asked about his views of the structure and performance of the JIC Sir Michael said that he was a sceptical reader of JIC assessments because it seemed to him that there was a tendency for the conclusions to be on the optimistic side. As far as the structure of the JIC was concerned he thought that there were sound administrative reasons, for example the FCO's responsibility for liaison with the intelligence agencies, for a strong FCO involvement in the JIC. He did not think that the

strength of the present relationship between the FCO and the JIC was essential but he did not feel that the JIC was too FCO orientated. His criticism of the JIC was not that its assessments reflected the view of any particular department but if anything that they tried too hard to present an impeccable consensus view. While there might be a role for a devil's advocate on the JIC he did not think that this was a proper role for its chairman. He would prefer to retain the present arrangement for the chairman of the JIC to be from the FCO.

1977 task force

12. Sir Michael Palliser said that deploying the task force had been Dr Owen's idea. Dr Owen had had difficulty convincing his colleagues but had enjoyed the support of the Prime Minister. Sir Michael said that he did not recall FCO officials objecting to the task force and he had thought at the time that it was a sensible precaution. Before the Ministers' meeting on 5 March 1982 Mr Ure had asked his advice about disclosing the facts of the 1977 task force to the present Government and he had thought it permissible to tell the Government about the previous decision which could be done without showing them the papers. It had not occurred to him at the time that the Government might have been advised of this at an earlier stage since in his view the climate and the

intelligence which reflected it were different in 1982 and 1977. In 1977 there had been a recent history of Argentine aggression and firmer intelligence about their aggressive policy. This was not so in 1982.

Signals to the Argentine Government

13. Sir Michael said that the Argentines could well have drawn the impression from the general cuts in defence expenditure and in particular the decision to withdraw the Endurance that Britain was no longer prepared to defend the Islands. This coupled with the British Government's attitude towards the development of the Islands, particularly in the light of the Shackleton report, could have given the Argentines reason to suppose that British interest in the Islands was weakening.

Prospects in March for negotiations

14. Sir Michael said that after the talks in February he had expected a further round or two of negotiations and that following those it would have become clear whether or not a dead end had been reached. At that point the Government would have had to make a choice between concessions to the Argentine or defence of the Islands. Defence of the Islands would have involved

difficult implications for Britain's relationship with friendly countries in the UN and with allies.

US/Argentine relations

15. Sir Michael said that he and some colleagues in the FCO had been sceptical for a long time about the extent to which Britain could rely on the support of the United States given the strength of United States interests in Latin America. He thought that General Galtieri was likely to have felt fairly confident of United States support. He also thought that Mr Enders would have been primarily concerned with United States interests during his visit to Argentina in March and little concerned with British interests. However while the FCO had had no illusions about United States support he thought that Ministers had been right to try to enlist their help. He

thought that Lord Carrington had also been sceptical of Enders's attitude and that his decision to go over Enders's head and appeal to Haig had been deliberate. He did not recall having seen any reports from the Ambassador in the United States warning about the United States attitude towards Argentina.

Sir Michael Palliser's overview of events.

16. Sir

Michael said that he would not entirely agree with the Chairman's account of events over 1981 and 1982. Although there had been some evidence of Argentine

impatience in 1982 including statements from the Government and a press campaign these developments had been seen in previous years and to his mind the events of 1982 presented no qualitative change in the situation. He thought that the only new factor which emerged in early 1982, in the bout de papier, was the Argentine time limit for negotiations. At the time he had felt that this had been introduced by the Government as a reflection of their and the Argentine public's preoccupation with the 150th anniversary due at the beginning of 1983. He thought of the South Georgia incident as the joker in the pack. He was not convinced that Davidoff's expedition had been contrived by the Argentine Government but he thought that it had provided an opportunity for the wilder men in the Argentine Government.

The Government had faced the difficulty in March that a reply to the Argentine communique which followed the February talks, sufficiently tough to satisfy British and Falkland Islander opinion, might have had the effect of precipitating the breakdown in negotiations which the Government had consistently tried to avoid.

FALKLAND ISLANDS REVIEW COMMITTEE

DRAFT SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE GIVEN BY MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

OFFICIALS ON FRIDAY 15 OCTOBER 1982

Present were Sir Frank Cooper
Admiral Sir Henry Leach
Admiral Sir John Fieldhouse
Mr Roger Jackling
Mr Nigel Nicholls

Contingency planning

Sir Frank Cooper explained that the paper prepared by the MOD as a contribution towards the Foreign Office paper intended for OD Committee was not, by MOD standards, a contingency plan. In MOD terminology a contingency plan was akin to a Joint Theatre Plan. Instructions for the preparation of a Joint Theatre Plan would have come from the Chiefs of Staff and would have been on the basis of specific assumptions about what the contingency plan should be designed to do. Sir Henry Leach said that the paper prepared for OD was, in MOD terms, a concept of operations which was a much looser appreciation of possible scenarios and which considered a much broader range of options. A concept of operations, in contrast to a Joint Theatre Plan, would not be expected to form the basis of instructions for the deployment of forces. In his opinion the reason why no Joint Theatre Plan had been prepared for the Falkland Islands was because the

main thrust of the policy had been to play down the Falkland Islands problem in support of the Government's main aim which had been to be careful to avoid a breakdown in the negotiations. Every effort had been made to avoid provoking the Argentines.

2. Sir Frank Cooper said that there had been no basic disagreement between the MOD and the FCO over the nature of the requirement for a contingency plan. They had agreed on the broad parameters , for example that the plan need not deal with evacuation nor the reinforcement of the tripwire force. The contingency planning programme had been geared to OD and it had been usual for OD to be related to the path of diplomatic talks. He did not feel that the programme had been held up by the lack of an OD meeting in Autumn 1981 but he thought that this was debatable in early 1982.

3. Sir John Fieldhouse said that after taking up his appointment as C in C Fleet in May 1981 he had become responsible both for the Royal Marine garrison on the Falkland Islands and for HMS Endurance and he had asked in the Summer of 1981 what arrangements would be made to support the Royal Marines when the Endurance was withdrawn. This had resulted in a remit from UK CICC(O) and in pressure from his planning staff for a proper Joint Theatre Plan for the Falklands. Sir Henry Leach said that the Chiefs of Staff would not be affected in their consideration of contingency plans by the lack of an OD meeting. However, the "whole ethos" at the time had been play down the Falkland Islands issue and to do as little as possible which might be misinterpreted by the Argentines as provocative and disrupt the flow of diplomatic

talks. The magnitude of the problem of producing a Joint Theatre Plan for the Falklands was also in peoples' minds. This was mainly because of the difficulties posed by the distance of the Falklands and the lack of a suitable airfield. Given the wide range of options open to the Argentines and the magnitude of forces which would have been required to effectively counter them, in particular in the event of an attempt to re-occupy the Islands after an invasion, a proper Joint Theatre Plan would have been a huge document. Sir Frank Cooper added that with hindsight he thought that it might have been wise to have had a particular contingency plan for the reinforcement of the Royal Marine garrison but he agreed with Sir Henry Leach's analysis about the difficulties of producing a document to cover all the options. It was not, however, always the practice to consult a Joint Theatre Plan in the event of Ministers deciding that action was necessary in response to some form of aggression. Ministers would be constantly briefed by the Chiefs of Staff about the kind of action which could be taken in certain circumstances.

4. Sir Henry Leach said that he believed that the concepts of operations which existed behind the scenes in the MOD and which formed the basis of the paper annexed to the draft OD paper were in his view sufficient to meet the eventualities of Argentine action and that they could not in the circumstances have been improved upon. He said that appropriate contingency plans for the Falklands had been considered repeatedly over a number of years with the same conclusions each time. The trip-wire force on the Falklands was recognised as inadequate as a deterrent but for an effective deterrent it was always felt

that the garrison would need to be reinforced by at least a commando group delivered by sea rather than air. In the event of a major Argentine military threat it was felt that a commando brigade would be necessary either for deterrence or possibly, for the retrieval of the Islands. He had no doubt that the concept of operations was a real plan into which real research and work had been put. Sir Frank Cooper said that without confidence in the basis of the concept of operations the Chiefs of Staff would not have been able to say late in March that the Falkland Islands could be retaken. The proof of the concept of operations was the speed at which the task force was eventually organised.

5. As regards the Prime Minister's request for contingency planning at the beginning of March, Mr Jackling said that following the minute from the Prime Minister's office on 8 March he had spoken to Mr Fearn at the FCO who had said that he proposed to respond to the minute by bringing forward the paper drafted by the FCO for OD on civil contingency planning. Their assumption that the Prime Minister had been interested in civil contingency planning had been reinforced by the fact that the note from her Private Office had been addressed to the FCO. When the Prime Minister had made a specific request for military plans from Mr Nott the MOD had responded with a paper on ship movements.

OD Committee

6. Sir Frank Cooper undertook to look into whether Ministers had in 1979 considered papers prepared by

the Ministry of Defence on military contingency plans for the Falkland Islands.

7. Sir Frank said that Ministers had not been encouraged to convene a meeting of OD because there had seemed to be very little indication at the time in terms of intelligence reports and other indications about Argentine intentions that such a meeting was warranted. He thought that with hindsight there were fewer indications than there ought to have been of an invasion. There had however also been a strong feeling in the MOD that the British stance on the Falklands was geared to the Government's main objective of continuing the negotiations for as long as possible and the feeling, reinforced by the available intelligence and the Argentines themselves, that the negotiations would continue. He had expected a further round of talks in 1982 and no trouble with Argentina at least until after those talks. Despite the fact that OD had been postponed several times he thought that there would have been an OD meeting in April. In retrospect it was possible to say that there ought to have been OD meetings at the end of 1981 and early in 1982 but he doubted that meetings at either time would have resulted in any action different to that which was actually taken. It was not unusual for items to slip from an agenda of OD or for meetings to be postponed. This was part of the regular course of business of Government as priorities changed and because of the difficulty of getting Ministers together who were often travelling abroad.

SSNs

8. Sir Henry Leach said that the decision to send the first

SSN HMS Spartan was taken on 29 March and the decision to send the second HMS Splendid on 30 March. Both vessels had sailed on 1 April. A decision had been taken on 31 March to prepare a third SSN HMS Conqueror for sailing.

9. Sir Henry said that he believed that his perception of events at the time in 1982 would not have caused him to advise the deployment of an SSN as had been done in 1977. He would have been influenced by the danger of such an action becoming known and therefore a danger to the negotiations.

It was usual for the Argentines to increase the pressure on the British negotiating position from time to time and the events of 1982 were in that respect similar to previous occasions.

10. Both Sir Henry Leach and Sir John Fieldhouse said that while they could not be certain, they thought it extremely unlikely that the United States would have been sufficiently aware of the deployment in 1977 to have advised the Argentines. Sir Frank Cooper undertook to check whether a request from Lord Carrington to send an SSN earlier, as had been alleged in the Observer, was true.

HMS Endurance

11. Sir Henry Leach said that the Endurance had a very limited defence capability and had been seen by the Navy as simply another part of the tripwire and useful for communication between the Falkland Islands and dependencies. Despite the

Government decision to withdraw the Endurance he had instructed the Navy staff to make every effort to delay the departure of the Endurance for as long as possible; as he was sure that within

the next eighteen months the Foreign Office would be asking for the reinstatement of the ship. Mr Nicholls said that he had also asked the naval staff to consider how the Endurance could be retained.

12. Sir Henry Leach said that he agreed with the view that the cuts in defence expenditure in the UK, particularly in the Navy and including the Endurance, would be open to interpretation by the Argentines as a measure of Britain's weakening commitment towards the Islands. Sir Frank Cooper said that the withdrawal of the Endurance was the only point of sustained argument between the FCO and the MOD on policy towards the Falkland Islands.

13. Sir John Fieldhouse said that there was no truth in the Observer article that he had reprimanded Captain Barker for his warnings about the Davidoff expedition. He had neither seen nor reprimanded Mr Barker during this period. Sir Frank Cooper undertook to check whether the newspaper article's allegation that Captain Barker had discussed his warnings with Mr Nott had any foundation.

14. Sir John Fieldhouse said that the only substantial warning from Captain Barker had been following the visit of

the Endurance to Ushuaia and this had not gone unnoticed in the MOD. It had for example enabled him to press his suggestion for a proper Joint Theatre Plan for the Falklands at a meeting of UK CICC(O). However at that meeting an FCO official had told him that the policy was to proceed by negotiation, and there was therefore no

question of a Joint Theatre Plan being prepared. Mr Jackling added that the same FCO official, despite his negative response at that meeting, had nevertheless been prompted to raise with him shortly afterwards the question of contingency planning. Sir John Fieldhouse said that he thought at the time that the warnings from HMS Endurance were sensible and that they had indicated a change in the Argentine position but they had not indicated that an imminent full scale invasion of the Falklands was likely. Sir Henry Leach added that although Captain Barker's warnings had been taken into account they had been balanced by other intelligence which indicated a different point of view. The threat assessment made at the time had been the product of the balance of evidence available.

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FIRC 8TH MEETING AGENDA

FALKLAND ISLANDS REVIEW COMMITTEE

The next meeting of the Committee will be held at 10.30 am on Monday 11, Thursday 14 and Friday 15 October in Room 3/95 Old Admiralty Building.

AGENDA

1. Minutes of 7th meeting (circulated herewith)
2. Matters arising
3. Programme of meetings beyond November
4. Oral evidence as follows:

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|----------|------------|-------------|---|----------------------|
| Monday | 8 October | at 10.45 am | : | SIS |
| | | " 12 noon | : | GCHQ |
| | | " 2.30 pm | : | JIC |
| Thursday | 14 October | at 11.00 am | : | Sir Michael Palliser |
| Friday | 15 October | at 11.00 am | : | MOD |
5. Preparation for oral evidence on 18 October (Mr Rowlands, Mr Callaghan and Dr Owen).

Secretary

7 October 1982

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