

CONFIDENTIAL

Mr Fearn SAMD

cc Mr Ure.

FALKLAND ISLANDS

1. I did not see your submission of 1 February until I returned yesterday from a meeting of the UK Commanders-in-Chief Committee (Overseas). But at that meeting Admiral Sir John Fieldhouse (Commander-in-Chief (Fleet)) closely questioned Rear-Admiral David Brown (ACDS (Ops)) about possible reinforcement of the Royal Marine contingent on the Falkland Islands, in the light of the latest threatening noises from Buenos Aires. Admiral Fieldhouse said he did not know what was expected of the Navy in this regard or whether perhaps the existing British contingent should be regarded as expendable in the event of hostile action against the Falklands by the Argentine Government. Rear-Admiral Brown seemed unable to offer much guidance from the point of view of MOD Operations, and smartly passed the buck to me for a Foreign Office view. I said, for lack of a better line, that no doubt part of the tough talk from the Argentines was intended to stiffen their position when negotiations resumed and we should not necessarily draw dire conclusions. I nevertheless suspect that there is very real uncertainty as between the MOD and the Commanders-in-Chief about what they would be likely to find themselves called upon to do, if deliberate harassment or worse by the Argentines were to take place. Do we need to think more about this and is there a case for giving, or seeking, political guidance?

P J Weston
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Defence Department

2 February 1982

Mr Fearn.

*Surely all concerned should look again at
standing order for the RM garrison.
I don't in fact think there is any special
crisis just at present. RM
Do you? 4/2*