

MINISTER OF STATE FOR
THE ARMED FORCES

D/MIN(AF)/PB/5/1/5

Prime Minister

SOUTH GEORGIA

1. In addition to our Statement in Parliament today and the next diplomatic moves we have been considering what precautionary steps to take in order to reinforce the British naval presence in the Falklands area, given recent increases in the scale of Argentine naval deployments in the area and the possibility of a further deterioration in the situation.
2. As you know, we have so far taken the following steps:
 - a. the strength of the Royal Marines garrison in Port Stanley has been doubled by holding back the outgoing detachment;
 - b. a support ship will arrive off South Georgia in two weeks' time with provisions for HMS ENDURANCE sufficient for another two months' stay;
 - c. the SSN HMS SPARTAN was yesterday instructed to sail to the South Atlantic as soon as possible after embarking the necessary weapons and provisions. She is due to arrive in the Falklands area by 13th April;
 - d. The Defence Secretary last night authorised the preparation of a second SSN, and we decided at our meeting this morning to confirm the orders for her sailing. HMS SPLENDID has been designated and should sail on 2nd April, arriving around 18th April.

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3. We are now considering what further steps might be taken. At our meeting this morning we looked at the possibility of sending a third SSN (which the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary favours). A submarine has been identified but has not yet been given orders to sail. There would be significant operational penalties which would, among other things, adversely affect joint operations with the Americans.
4. The great advantage of using these SSNs is that their passage can remain covert until we wish to reveal it. Even if media speculation focusses on SSNs the Argentines themselves will be left guessing. It will, of course, be necessary to draw up precise rules of engagement for the submarine Commanding Officers. While on patrol they would carry out covert surveillance and would be available to afford protection to HMS ENDURANCE. If need be, their presence could be declared in order to deter the Argentines from any precipitate military action. In the worst case they could carry out formidable retaliation against the Argentine Navy.
5. We can meanwhile face Parliament confidently if pressed about naval contingency measures without, of course, revealing details. We retain political and operational flexibility.
6. We have also looked at the possibility of deploying surface ships. It would be possible to detach a force of 7 RN destroyers and frigates (with supply ships) from current exercises in the Atlantic off Gibraltar. It would take some 16 days for them to reach the Falklands area. But our intentions would become known very quickly, which would be likely to complicate our diplomatic exchanges with the Argentines. In any case, the Ministry of Defence have reservations on military grounds about using a detachment of surface ships of this size as a show of force against the Argentines, who could easily field a larger force, which could include their aircraft carrier.
7. A more credible force in military terms would be a task group comprising a carrier, at least 4 or 5 surface escorts, possibly a commando group of 800 Royal Marines and perhaps a submarine as well as support ships. Quite apart from the fact that this would take

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about 24 days to muster and arrive in the area, it would be very difficult and expensive to sustain. The preparations could not be concealed and it would prove highly provocative and hence escalatory, unless the Argentines were preparing to invade the Falklands. There is at present no sign of this. This option is being examined internally within the Ministry of Defence in view of the significant military implications. The Chiefs of Staff will wish to consider this and other possible options very carefully and their advice will be available when we discuss the matter at OD.

8. The MOD have separately reconsidered the possibility of reinforcing the Falklands by air and have confirmed that this is impracticable unless diplomatic clearance could be acquired to stage through either Uruguay or Chile.

9. We suggest that the way ahead might best be discussed at OD on Thursday.

R. P. CRAINE *PS*

Foreign and Commonwealth
Secretary

for Minister of State
(Armed Forces)

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DRAFT MINUTE TO THE PRIME MINISTER

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SOUTH GEORGIA

In addition to our Statement in Parliament today and the next diplomatic moves we have been considering what precautionary steps to take in order to reinforce the British naval presence in the Falklands area, given recent increases in the scale of Argentine naval presence in the Falklands area and the possibility of a further deterioration in the situation.

2. As you know, we have so far taken the following steps:

a. the strength of the Royal Marines garrison in Port Stanley has been doubled by holding back the outgoing detachment;

b. a support ship will arrive off South Georgia in two weeks' time with provisions for HMS ENDURANCE sufficient for another two months' stay;

c. the SSN HMS SPARTAN was yesterday instructed to sail to the South Atlantic as soon as possible after embarking the necessary weapons and provisions. She is due to arrive in the Falklands area by 13th April;

d. The Defence Secretary last night authorised the preparation of a second SSN, and we decided at our meeting this morning to confirm the orders for her sailing. HMS SPLENDID has been designated and should sail on 2nd April, arriving around 18th April.

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3. We are now considering what further steps might be taken. At our meeting this morning we looked at the possibility of sending a third SSN. A submarine has been identified but has not yet been given orders to sail. There would be significant operational penalties which would, among other things, adversely affect joint operations with the Americans. 4. The great advantage of using these boats is that their passage can remain covert until we wish to reveal it. Even if media speculation focusses on SSNs the Argentines themselves will be left guessing.)

4. It will, of course, be necessary to draw up precise rules of engagement for the submarine Commanding Officers. While on patrol they would be used to carry out covert surveillance and would be available to afford protection to HMS ENDURANCE. If need be, their presence could be declared in order to deter the Argentines from any precipitate military action. In the worst case they could carry out formidable retaliation against the Argentine Navy.

5. We can meanwhile face Parliament confidently if pressed about naval contingency measures without, of course, revealing details. We retain political and operational flexibility.

6. We have also looked at the possibility of deploying surface ships. It would be possible to detach a force of around 7 RN destroyers and frigates from current exercises in the Atlantic off Gibraltar. It would take some 16 days for them to reach the Falklands area. But our intentions would become known very quickly, which would be likely to complicate our diplomatic exchanges with the Argentines. In any case, the Ministry of Defence have reservations on military grounds about using a detachment of surface ships of this size as a show of force against the Argentines, who could easily field a larger force.

7. A more credible force in military terms would be a task group comprising a carrier, 4 or 5 surface escorts, a commando group of 800 Royal Marines and perhaps a submarine as well as support ships. Quite apart from the fact that this would take a month to muster and arrive in the area, it would be very difficult and expensive to sustain there for more than a month or so. Bearing in mind that the preparations could not be concealed, it would, of course, be highly provocative and escalatory, unless the Argentines were preparing to invade the Falklands. There is at present no sign of this. This option is being examined internally within the Ministry of Defence in view of the significant military implications. The Chiefs of Staff will wish to consider this very carefully and their advice will be available when we discuss the matter at OD.

~~8. I hope that you can agree that this is the right way to proceed.~~

8. ~~8.~~ The MOD have separately reconsidered the possibility of reinforcing the Falklands by air and have confirmed that this is impracticable.

9. ~~9.~~ We suggest that the way ahead might best be discussed at OD on Thursday.

Furman and
 Cunningham
 Harris

MINISTER OF
 DEFENCE (ARMED FORCES)

Revised)

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DRAFT: minute/~~letter~~/~~bulletin~~/~~dispatch~~/~~note~~

TYPE: Draft/Final 1+ *38*

FROM: Secretary of State
Mr Blaker

Reference

DEPARTMENT:

TEL. NO:

D

TO: Prime Minister

Your Reference

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

Top Secret
Secret
Confidential
Restricted
Unclassified

Copies to:

PRIVACY MARKING

SUBJECT: SOUTH GEORGIA

.....In Confidence

CAVEAT.....

1. We have been considering In addition to my statement in Parliament today and the next diplomatic moves, what precautionary steps to take in order to reinforce the British naval presence in the Falklands area. As you know a support ship will arrive there in two weeks' time with provisions for HMS ENDURANCE sufficient for another 2 months' stay. But this by itself is obviously not *enough* sufficient in the face of recent moves by the Argentine ~~Government~~ *NAVY* // 2. It would be possible to detach a force of some 7 *RN* destroyers and frigates from current exercises in the Atlantic off Gibraltar. It would take ~~then~~ *for them* some 16 days to reach the Falklands area. But I fear our intentions would become known very quickly, which would be likely to complicate our diplomatic exchanges with the Argentines, ~~and~~

I In any case the Navy have reservations on military grounds about using a detachment of surface ships of this size as a show of force against the Argentines.

Enclosures—flag(s).....

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B. A more credible force in naval terms would be a task group comprising a carrier, 4 or 5 frigates, ~~a command group of some 800 Royal Marines~~ ^{commandos} and perhaps a submarine, as well as support ships. Quite apart from the fact that this would take a month to muster and arrive in the area, it would be very difficult and expensive to sustain there for more than 2 to 3 months. It would of course also be ^{highly} provocative and escalatory, ~~unless we foresaw a real risk of the Argentines invading the Falklands~~ ^{short of} ~~which is not at present the case.~~ ^{there is} ~~no sign of this.~~

unless the Argentines were preparing to

G. We have therefore concluded that our best bet lies with a judicious use of our nuclear-powered fleet attack submarines ^(SSNs). One is already on the way South and will arrive in the Falklands area by 13 April. Another submarine ^{will} ~~could detach~~ ^{following} ~~from present duties~~ ^{leaving present duties} and sail by the end of this week. We both favour ^{detaching} ~~preparing~~ a third submarine to join them as soon as possible. The great advantage of using these boats is that their passage can remain covert until we wish to reveal it. Even if ^{media} ~~intelligent~~ speculation focusses on ~~this possibility~~ ^{SSNs} the Argentines themselves will be left guessing. If we do have to make use of ~~them~~ ^{two submarines} on the spot, they constitute a formidable naval force. We can ^{meanwhile} ~~face~~ Parliament confidently if pressed about naval contingency measures, without of course revealing details.

is to provide any necessary protection for
is to protect HMS Edinburgh

S E C R E T

DSR 11C

political & operational

we retain the greatest possible flexibility of action.

~~until the point of our choosing~~ / If ~~in the meantime~~

the problem is resolved through the diplomatic

channel, nothing will have been lost // ⁵ I hope you

can agree that this is the right way to proceed.

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