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ACDS(Ops)FALKLAND ISLANDS: AIR DEFENCE

The Secretary of State, who is away from London on an official visit, has just telephoned me to ask that the possibility of providing some limited air defence for the Falkland Islands be looked at urgently. What the Secretary of State would like looked at is a possible Rapier capability.

2. S of S would like to know whether it would be possible to airlift a Rapier detachment to Ascension, and for it to be picked up from there by the RFA which is to resupply HMS ENDURANCE. S of S would be grateful if you could let him know what the capability of Rapier would be in the air defence of, say, Port Stanley, given Falkland Islands weather conditions, how and from where such a unit could be provided and whether it would be visual or blindfire, the operational penalties to other commitments for so doing, and what logistic options would be open for transporting the unit - including the possibility of partial air movement via Ascension as mentioned above.

3. S of S would be grateful for a report on this by 1730 tonight.

31st March 1982

 DB OMAND
 PS/S of S