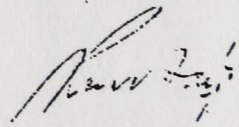57

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SECCOS

FALKLAND ISLANDS

1.   Here is a note on the military options available to the RAF relative to Argentina.

2.   Medium Bomber Aircraft. Attacks by Vulcans with 1000lb bombs against Argentinian cities or ships in Argentinian waters would have to be launched from Ascension Island. As the aircraft no longer have an air-to-air refuelling capability (their radius of action at high level is 1750 nm) they would have to land on completion of the mission on the South American continent - possibly Montevideo, Punta Arenas or Santiago. Without the use of such airfields, air attacks by Vulcans on Argentinian targets are not feasible. Bombing attacks could, however, be carried out against Argentinian shipping in the South Atlantic out to 1750 nm from Ascension Island.

3.   Buccaneers.   Buccaneers, armed with 1000lb bombs and/or Martel ASMs, based at Ascension Island could - depending on weapon load - attack shipping out to about a maximum radius of 600 nm without air-to-air refuelling. With air-to-air refuelling from Victor tankers based at Ascension Island, attacks could be mounted out to about 1500 nm.

4.   Maritime Patrol Aircraft.   The use of Montevideo or Punta Arenas by Nimrods would enable surface and sub-surface surveillance, torpedo attacks against submarines, and limited torpedo attacks against unarmed surface vessels to be conducted in the sea areas encompassing the Falkland Islands and South Georgia. Nimrods based at Ascension could patrol at a distance of 1000 nm for 4 hrs, and for 3 hrs at 1200 nm. Anti-submarine attacks and limited torpedo attacks against surface vessels could be undertaken out to a maximum range of about 1500 nm; however, the time available to locate targets at that distance would be very limited. Nimrods could also play an important part in any co-ordinated plan to conduct surveillance against Argentinian shipping in other parts of the world - given the availability of bases.

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