

Copy No 1.3 of 45 copies

2038/3

Minister(AF)
US of S(AF)
CDS
CNS
CGS
CAS
PUS
VCDS(P&L)
DCDS(I)
DUS(P)
ACDS(Pol)
ACDS(Ops)
ACDS(S)
ACDS(P&L)
AUS(D Staff)
FCO (Defence Dept)
SECCOS

SECRETARY OF STATEFALKLAND ISLANDS

1. The DOE this afternoon examined a wide range of options which might be contemplated following the invasion of the Falkland Islands by the Argentinians. The object of this minute is to let you know the short, medium and longer term military options which we have examined.

Short Term Options

2. HMS ENDURANCE: Is due to arrive off Port Stanley at noon on 4 April. She is equipped with 2 Oerlikon guns and carries 2 Wasp helicopters equipped with AS12 anti-ship missiles.
3. RM Detachment in South Georgia. Is 22 strong. Could immediately arrest the illegal Argentine party at Leith with the minimum of military preparation. The Royal Marines should be capable of dealing with the party ashore, but the BAHIA PARAISO, known to be off-shore and capable of carrying Marines could land a superior force.
4. RM Company Group. 150 strong. Could be flown out to Ascension Island and embarked on RFA FORT AUSTIN on 6 April. They could be held on board FORT AUSTIN for use either on South Georgia or on the Falkland Islands should circumstances permit. This force could be despatched at comparatively short notice. As an alternative the leading company of the SPEARHEAD battalion (3 PARA) could be used instead.

SECRET

5. Additional Support Troops. Specialist support of further air defence detachments and communication detachments can be made available by the Army to provide further support for the fighting troops in FORT AUSTIN in a similar timescale to para 4.

6. SAS. Teams could be available for operations or covert intelligence gathering on mainland Argentina in a short timescale deployed by civil air to the nearest available airport.

7. Air Options. The use of Montivideo or Punta Arenas would open options for Nimrod Maritime Patrol aircraft and possibly bomber/attack aircraft in the South Atlantic. The use of Ascension Island as a base for bomber/attack aircraft would provide a limited capability against opportunity Argentine targets transitting the South Atlantic within 1750 nm of Ascension Island.

Medium Term Options

8. SSNs.

a. Offensive Operations. The 3 SSNs to be deployed to the area could carry out offensive operations against Argentine warships. This could inflict considerable damage to the Argentine fleet. If the action were threatened beforehand, however, there would be a risk that Argentine ships would be withdrawn to harbour prior to an attack.

b. Blockade. Could be mounted selectively against identified ships. Inflexible because application of force cannot be graduated. Moreover, maintenance of an effective blockade would require at least 2 SSNs on station. A continuous blockade would entail employing 6 SSNs (ie almost the entire SSN operational force).

9. SBS. Small raiding and sabotage parties (both ashore and afloat) could be mounted either independently or in conjunction with a submarine blockade. Logistic problems would be minimal and operations relatively easy to mount.

Long Term Options

10. RN Task Force. The size of a task force would largely be determined by the scale of the Argentine invasion force. It could be used for offensive operations against Argentinian naval units and its embarked landing force could be employed on evicting the Argentines from the Falklands or securing any part of the Falklands group not already occupied by Argentinian forces.

a. HMS HERMES, 4 DD/FF plus 1 RM Commando Group (800).
A force this size would be capable of dealing with about 200 Argentinians. It would take only 3 days to prepare in the UK. The news of its deployment might provoke the Argentine Navy into exposing its ships to submarine attack. On the other hand, the Argentines would have ample opportunity to reinforce their garrison in the Falklands to a level too great for a Commando Group to carry out a successful re-occupation. Moreover, a force of this size would still be vulnerable to a superior Argentine force.

b. CVS, LPH, LPD, LSLs, about 10 DD/FF plus RM Commando Brigade. This force could be expected decisively to defeat the Argentine Navy at sea. The landing force element would be capable of dealing with an Argentinian battalion size force. The threat of invasion would be likely to provoke the Argentine navy into action to defend the Argentine position in the Falklands. It would take at least a week to mount and would pose considerable logistic problems. It would also result in the withdrawal of important assets available to SACLANT. Were the island re-occupied without the decisive defeat of the Argentine fleet, a force of this size would have to be retained in the area for a considerable period; and the Argentines could easily restore their forces following its withdrawal. With the onset of the Antarctic winter, amphibious operations might be difficult to mount for prolonged periods.

11. Joint Service Task Force. Using the RM Commando Brigade as the leading element and 5 Infantry Brigade as the second wave a Joint Service Task Force could be mounted. Such a force would take a some time to prepare in UK and would inevitably involve commercial shipping as well as RN ships. This landing force would be capable of dealing with an Argentinian Brigade.

1 April 1982

ACTING CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE STAFF

→ file. 46

Copy No of 25 copies

2038/2

Minister(AF)
 US of S(AF)
 CDS
 CNS
 CGS
 CAS
 PUS
 VCDS(P&L)
 DCDS(I)
 DUS(P)
 ACDS(Pol)
 ACDS(Ops)
 ACDS(S)
 ACDS(P&L)
 AUS(D Staff)
 FCO (Defence Dept)
 SECCOS

SSNs there?
 Security Council

SECRETARY OF STATEFALKLAND ISLANDS

1. The DOE met this afternoon to discuss the military actions necessary following the decisions taken this morning at OD. The object of this minute is let you know what we have identified by way of personnel and equipment for airlift to Ascension Island by 5 April to meet RFA FORT AUSTIN on her passage to the South Atlantic. In identifying this package the DOE were conscious of the need to restrict the airlift to Ascension Island to about 4 Hercules loads.
2. The package comprises the following:
 - a. Blowpipe. A detachment of 8 launchers and 30 Royal Marines;
 - b. Helicopters. Two RN LYNX helicopters which have a lift and AS12 missile capability and 18 RN personnel.
 - c. Communications. A satellite station with 6 operators to provide a secure voice and telegraph link back to the UK on a 24 hour a day basis.
3. The DOE also identified another package of equipment which it would be desirable to move to Port Stanley but which was of a lower priority. This consists of a number of equipments designed to improve the airfield facilities at Port Stanley by reducing the risks of effecting a very limited air reinforcement, and thereby increasing our longer term options.

4. This package consists of:

- a. Communications. HF links for Hercules and LYNX operations.
- b. POL Equipment. Pillow tanks, pumps and piping.

5. The first package (paragraph 2) should need no more than 5 Hercules. The DOE have recommended that the second package (paragraph 4) should be transported by air to Gibraltar for onward shipment by RFA APPLELEAF, the tanker due to depart Gibraltar tomorrow for the South Atlantic. The feasibility of the second package is still being investigated.

ACD(S)
D/S(P)
ACD(S) (Pol)
ACD(S) (Ops)
ACD(S) (S)
ACD(S) (P&L)
AS&D Staff

1 April 1982

ACTING CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE STAFF

MEMORANDUM OF STATE

ASCENSION ISLAND

1. We discussed this afternoon the military actions now necessary following the general decisions taken this morning at 08. The object of this minute is to confirm what we have identified as way of personnel and equipment for airlift to Ascension Island by 5 April to meet RFA FORT MUSTIN on her passage to the South Atlantic. In identifying this package we have endeavoured to keep the airlift requirements to Ascension Island to the minimum.

2. The package comprises the following as an immediate priority:

- a. Shipboard. A detachment of 8 launchers and 30 Royal Marines.
- b. Helicopters. Two RN LYNX helicopters which have a lift and 5.2 km missile capability and 18 RN personnel.
- c. Communications. A satellite station with 6 operators to provide a secure voice and telegraph link back to the UK on a 24 hour a day basis.

3. We also discussed another package of equipment which it is desirable to move to Port Stanley but which was of a lower priority. This consists of a number of equipments designed to improve the airfield facilities at Port Stanley by reducing the risks of affecting a very limited air reinforcement, and thereby increasing our longer term options. This package comprises:

2038/2

Minister(AF)
 US of S(AF)
 CDS
 CNS
 CGS
 CAS
 PUS
 VCDS(P&L)
 DCDS(I)
 DUS(P)
 ACDS(Pol)
 ACDS(Ops)
 ACDS(S)
 ACDS(P&L)
 AUS(D Staff)
 FCO (Defence Dept)
 SECCOS

SECRETARY OF STATEFALKLAND ISLANDS

1. We discussed this afternoon the military actions now necessary following the general decisions taken this morning at OD. The object of this minute is to confirm what we have identified by way of personnel and equipment for airlift to Ascension Island by 5 April to meet RFA FORT AUSTIN on her passage to the South Atlantic. In identifying this package we have endeavoured to keep the airlift requirement to Ascension Island to the minimum.
2. The package comprises the following as an immediate priority:
 - a. Blowpipe. A detachment of 8 launchers and 30 Royal Marines;
 - b. Helicopters. Two RN LYNX helicopters which have a lift and AS12 missile capability and 18 RN personnel.
 - c. Communications. A satellite station with 6 operators to provide a secure voice and telegraph link back to the UK on a 24 hour a day basis.
3. We also discussed another package of equipment which it is desirable to move to Port Stanley but which was of a lower priority. This consists of a number of equipments designed to improve the airfield facilities at Port Stanley by reducing the risks of effecting a very limited air reinforcement, and thereby increasing our longer term options. This package comprises:

a. Communications. HF links and navigational aids for HERCULES and LYNX operations, supported by a team of 7 airmen.

b. POL Equipment. Pillow tanks, pumps and piping, with a team of 8 airmen.

4. Such reinforcements would need 6 (possibly 7) HERCULES. The first priority package (paragraph 2) would require 5 HERCULES but you considered that the desirability of the further package (at paragraph 3) was such that the extra aircraft required for its movement to Ascension for transfer to the RFA FORT AUSTIN was preferable to the alternative of sailing from Gibraltar on RFA APPLELEAF (entailing a 7 day later arrival at Port Stanley).

5. We are proceeding with these arrangements.

1st April 1982

ACTING CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE STAFF