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Head of DS11
DS5 - Mrs McLoughlin

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FALKLAND ISLANDS

1. A record of the Cabinet Office meeting of officials this afternoon will be circulated to Departments later in the day, but I thought you and copy addressees might like to know of the points covered following your own departure. These were as follows:-

a. Sales Shipments. The question was raised as to whether there were any sales shipments being made to Argentina or any sales export licences currently under consideration. DS5 are ascertaining the position with HDS Staffs, with a view to considering any braking action that may be prepared.

b. Ammunition loading restrictions on UK ports. The meeting took note of the possible need to relax ammunition loading restrictions in relation to possible movements of UK forces, and I undertook to keep the Department of Transport in touch with any developments in this area. The officer concerned in DOT is a Mr F Elders - telephone 01 212 7442. The meeting assumed that such measures would be at least partially overt, but that this would be quite consistent with the Parliamentary statement made by the Lord President of the Council.

c. HMS Endurance. The Chairman reminded the meeting that Ministers had decided that should HMS Endurance get to the Falkland Islands after any outbreak of hostilities, she was to stand off from the coastline.

d. Civil aviation. The Chairman confirmed with MOD staffs that there was not yet any requirement for civil air transport resources in relation to possible UK force movements.

e. Merchant shipping. The Department of Trade recorded that should passenger shipping be required for operational needs an Order in Council would be necessary, and Ministers would need to consider the arguments in support of such measures. The Chairman observed that this would be for consideration following any Ministerial decision actually to embark UK forces.

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f. Argentinian shipping. Department of Trade reported one Argentinian vessel in Folkestone and two others expected at Heysham. Any unusual movements might indicate some new development in the situation. No restrictions were being made on these ships' movements for the time being.

g. Argentinian nationals in UK. The Home Office suggested that consideration be given to some observation of Embassy staffs who might have an intelligence interest in UK planning and movements. But the Chairman thought that any UK movements were so overt and so extended in duration as to be entirely apparent.

h. Red Cross. The FCO were asked to consider whether an appeal should be made for international Red Cross intervention, especially in South Georgia where local medical facilities were very limited.

The meeting, which as yet has no formal appellation, did not think that it was likely to have to reconvene during the weekend, but the Cabinet Office would stand ready to take such action if necessary. It was noted that both the FCO and the MOD had operations rooms on a 24 hour basis, and should other Departments need to be involved outside working hours, then their duty officers would be on call.

*Newham
Beaumont*

2 April 1982

N J BEAUMONT
Head of DS12

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