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COS 3RD MEETING/82

Copy No.....

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
CHIEFS OF STAFF COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a Meeting held in Room 5301, Ministry
of Defence, Main Building, Whitehall,
on SATURDAY 3 APRIL 1982 at 9.30 am

PRESENT

Air Chief Marshal Sir Michael Beetham
Acting Chief of the Defence Staff

Admiral Sir Henry Leach,
Chief of the Naval Staff

Lieutenant General Sir Thomas Morony,
Representing the
Chief of the General Staff

Air Marshal Sir David Craig,
Representing the Chief of the Air Staff

ALSO PRESENT

Air Chief Marshal Sir David Evans,
Vice Chief of the Defence Staff
(Personnel and Logistics)

Lieutenant General Sir James Glover,
Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff
(Intelligence)

Commodore R G Heaslip,
Representing the
Assistant Chief of the Defence
Staff (Policy)

Brigadier H J Goodson,
Representing the
Assistant Chief of the Defence
Staff (Operations)

Air Vice-Marshal T B Stephenson,
Assistant Chief of the Defence
Staff (Signals)

Colonel J K Pitt,
Representing the
Director Defence Operational
Movements Staff

Sir Frank Cooper,
Permanent Under Secretary

Mr I S McDonald,
Deputy Chief of Public Relations

Mr P R H Wright,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

SECRETARIAT

Brigadier J A C G Eyre
Captain J E S Raymond RN
Lieutenant Colonel W S Bale
Commander M Bickley

C O N T E N T S

PART I - ITEMS DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING

1-4 (1) OPERATION CORPORATE

PART II - ITEMS DEALT WITH PRIOR TO THE MEETING

N11

Note:

1. Recorded as a Confidential Annex.

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CHIEFS OF STAFF COMMITTEE

CONFIDENTIAL ANNEXTOCOS 3RD MEETING/82 HELD ON
SATURDAY 3 APRIL 1982 AT 9.30amITEM 1. INTELLIGENCE UPDATE

1. SIR MICHAEL BEETHAM (Acting Chief of the Defence Staff) invited LIEUTENANT GENERAL GLOVER (Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff (Intelligence)) to update them on the situation in the Falkland Islands and South Georgia.

2. LIEUTENANT GENERAL GLOVER said present information indicated that the assault on the Falkland Islands yesterday by Argentine forces had been carried out in 3 phases. The first phase appeared to have been a clandestine landing from a submarine by a special forces unit which had resulted in the seizure of the airfield and lighthouse. The second phase had been an assault landing by a Marine Battalion which had then taken all main objectives. In the third and final phase follow-up army units with heavy equipment including armoured vehicles had been landed from ships and by Hercules aircraft. There were now believed to be up to 3,000 Argentine military personnel in the Falkland Islands. There had been no formal information on casualties.

3. Outlining the situation in South Georgia, LIEUTENANT GENERAL GLOVER said it was believed that an attack on the British Antarctic Survey base at Grytviken had not yet been made but that it was likely today, following some sort of ultimatum to the Base Commander. There were 22 Royal Marines at Grytviken and HMS ENDURANCE was proceeding towards their position.

4. Concluding, LIEUTENANT GENERAL GLOVER said the Argentine Naval Task Force had established an East-West patrol line North of the Falkland Islands along latitude 50 degrees South. The forces involved were believed to be 1 or 2 destroyers and 1 or 2 submarines with orders to prevent merchant shipping from proceeding South of the patrol line. The aircraft carrier with 3 destroyers and an ice-breaker were in the vicinity of Port Stanley and a destroyer and 2 transports were believed to be returning to Comodoro Rivadavia. Two Corvettes were still believed to be patrolling between the Falkland Islands and South Georgia. There were no Soviet military forces in the vicinity of the Falklands although there was a Soviet fishing fleet some 50 miles to the North-East.

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5. In further discussion the Committee noted that the following further developments had occurred since they had last met:

a. Argentina had asked Chile not to re-supply UK ships and aircraft en route to the Falkland Islands. The possibility of Argentine concessions regarding the Beagle Channel as a quid pro quo had been hinted. Chile had not yet formally replied to the Argentine request.

b. Brazil had said she would provide no facilities or assistance for United Kingdom forces engaged in operations against the Argentinians.

c. The Governor of the Falkland Islands and Royal Marines from Port Stanley were now believed to be in Montevideo. In anticipation of the confirmation of this report, a VC10 was being despatched via Ascension Island to collect the party which should arrive back at Brize Norton at 0800 on Monday 5 April.

ITEM 2. OWN FORCES

6. BRIGADIER GOODSON (Acting Assistant Chief of the Defence Staff (Operations)) said that the US State Department had agreed our use of the airfield and facilities at Ascension Island for the movement of men and equipment to join RFA FORT AUSTIN on 6 April. This approval applied only to the movement of personnel and stores to FORT AUSTIN. Any further requirement to utilise the Ascension Island facilities would be subject to the advance approval of the US State Department. The movement of men and equipment to Ascension Island for OPERATION CORPORATE was continuing satisfactorily, and a situation report (1) would be issued separately. He also said that the Air Force Department had released 100 Sidewinder missiles (25% of the total UK stock) to the task force.

7. REAR ADMIRAL WHETSTONE (Acting Chief of the Naval Staff (Operations)) said that:

a. HMS ENDURANCE had been ordered to support the Royal Marines in South Georgia to the best of her ability but she had not been authorised to take pre-emptive action and the rules of engagement for the Royal Marines at Grytviken permitted them to open fire without warning in the event of an armed landing. The position of the Argentine corvette was

Note:

1. COS S12(1) OPERATION CORPORATE (Issue 3).

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unknown but, on current intelligence, it appeared that the Grytviken party did not face the same overwhelming opposition as had the garrison of the Falkland Islands.

b. To enable more aircraft to be embarked in HMS HERMES, the Navy had obtained the approval of the Secretary of State to take up the SS CANBERRA from trade to embark about 500 men of 3 Commando Brigade. The ship's owners had agreed in principle but an Order in Council would be required. It was proposed that the considerable extra capacity of the ship should be utilised to carry additional ground forces.

8. SIR THOMAS MORONY (Representing the Chief of the General Staff) said he intended 3 PARA Group (about 600 men) to form the additional ground forces to be embarked in CANBERRA, subject to Ministerial approval.

ITEM 3. DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION

9. SIR FRANK COOPER (Permanent Under Secretary of State) said that he would circulate a reminder to the Defence Staffs to be alert to the dangers of embarrassing friendly countries by the inadvertent, or premature, disclosure of preliminary planning options. If such disclosures do occur then they could well prejudice our chances of receiving favourable replies when at a later date it became necessary to make formal requests.

ITEM 4. FORECAST OF DECISIONS REQUIRED

10. The Chiefs of Staff reviewed the forecast of decisions (2) which had been identified.

11. SIR FRANK COOPER said that he would set in hand the necessary negotiations with the appropriate US authorities to enable the facilities at Ascension Island to be utilised during OPERATION CORPORATE as the need arose without any prior approval needing to be obtained for each individual request.

12. Following discussion on possible military options, SIR MICHAEL BEETHAM, in summing up, said that they would wish to instruct the Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff (Intelligence) in conjunction with the Joint Intelligence Committee to review and refine on a regular basis the intelligence appreciation (3) on the capability of the Argentine Armed Forces, of which they had already seen a draft. They would further wish to instruct the Assistant Chief of the Defence Staff (Operations), in conjunction with the single

Notes:

2. Annex A to Part I to COS 3rd Meeting/82 (attached).
3. Air Cdre (Int) 1023/2 dated 3 April 1982.

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Services and the Defence Secretariat, to co-ordinate the preparation of a military appreciation to review the military options, and their possible consequences, in support of Government policy to restore British Sovereignty to the Falkland Islands and Dependencies. This appreciation was to establish military options taking account of:

- a. Meteorology and Oceanography;
- b. Intelligence capability;
- c. Implications of time;
- d. Effects on NATO;
- e. Sustainability;
- f. Air/Sea lift capability.

13. Continuing, SIR MICHAEL BEETHAM said they would wish to instruct the Assistant Chief of the Defence Staff (Operations), in conjunction with the single Services and the Defence Secretariat, to examine the requirement for establishing a forward operating base at Ascension Island.

14. Concluding, SIR MICHAEL BEETHAM said they would wish to instruct their Secretary to bring forward the review of military options for their initial consideration at their meeting on Monday 5 April.

15. The Chiefs of Staff agreed with the remarks of the Acting Chief of the Defence Staff in his summing up.

OPERATION CORPORATE - FORECAST OF DECISIONS REQUIRED

ITEM	ARISING FROM COS MEETING	DECISION REQUIRED	BY	PROGRESS
0001	2/82 Item 4 para 8a	ROE for SSNs	Ministers	ND have under review
0002	2/82 Item 4 para 8a	Likely employment of SSNs on arrival off Falkland Islands	Ministers	ND have under review
0003	2/82 Item 4 para 8b	Directive for Task Force Commander	Ministers	ND have under review - can be signalled after Force sails
0004	2/82 Item 4 para 8b	Directive for Embarked Military Force Commander	Ministers	ND have under review - can be signalled after Force sails
0005	2/82 Item 4 para 8c	Instructions for RFA FORT AUSTIN	-	ND action
0006	2/82 Item 4 para 8d	Legal position of UK in dispute with the Argentine	Ministers	FCO are investigating
0007	2/82 Item 4 para 8e	Advice on evacuation of British nationals (1,000) from Argentina	Ministers	FCO advise that this could be undertaken by routine civilian air services