

COS 4TH MEETING/82

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MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
 CHIEFS OF STAFF COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a Meeting held in Room 5301, Ministry
 of Defence; Main Building, Whitehall,
 on SUNDAY 4 APRIL 1982 at 9.30 am

PRESENT

Air Chief Marshall Sir M Beetham
 Chief of the Air 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

The Rt Hon John Nott MP
 Secretary of State for Defence

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)

Rear-Admiral D W Brown,
 Assistant Chief of the Defence
 Staff (Operations)

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

Rear-Admiral J W T Walters
 Assistant Chief of the Defence Staff
 (Personnel and Logistics)

Brigadier R E L Jenkins,
 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
 Wing Commander A M Wills

C O N T E N T S

PART I - ITEMS DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING

1-8 (1) OPERATION CORPORATE

PART II - ITEMS DEALT WITH PRIOR TO THE MEETING

Nil

Note:

1. Issued as a Confidential Annex.

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TO

COS 4TH MEETING/82 HELD ON
SUNDAY 4 APRIL 1982 AT 9.30am

1. MR JOHN NOTT (Secretary of State for Defence) thanked the Chiefs of Staff for inviting him to attend their Meeting.

ITEM 1. INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENT

2. 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.

3. LIEUTENANT GENERAL GLOVER said that the British Antarctic Survey base at Grytviken had been attacked by Argentine marines yesterday afternoon; the Argentine force had been put ashore from landing craft with a Corvette standing off in support. The assault had been held up for 30 minutes by the 22 strong Royal Marine shore party and, during the exchange of fire, one Argentine Puma helicopter had been shot down and the Corvette damaged by rounds from a Carl Gustav anti-tank weapon. Three Argentines had been killed.

4. Outlining the situation in the Falkland Islands LIEUTENANT GENERAL GLOVER said that the Argentine build-up was continuing. The initial invasion forces probably numbered not more than 1,000 men and, because of limited facilities at the airport, reinforcement lifts had probably only increased this number by a further 1,000. He estimated that Argentine forces on the Falkland Islands were now a Brigade Headquarters with just over 2 Battalions under command. He further assessed that Argentina was already facing a heavy logistic burden, but that her aim would be to build up her forces to approximately a Brigade Group of around 5,000 men. Continuing, LIEUTENANT GENERAL GLOVER said that the Argentine Carrier Group had now stood off to the North West to refuel in shallower waters. The Transport Group had returned to Argentina possibly to reload, but the Patrol Group, consisting of two submarines supported by a destroyer, was still in position at latitude 50 degrees South. The two French built Argentine frigates, on station between the Falkland Islands and South Georgia, were holding off to the North to refuel. He suspected that the Argentine Navy would, as the operation continued, face severe limitations imposed by the inadequacy of their fleet support ships.

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5. In conclusion, LIEUTENANT GENERAL GLOVER summarised a CIA assessment of the positions held by other South American countries concerning the dispute. Brazil, Bolivia, Peru and Ecuador had all declared support for Argentina; Venezuela had withheld open support, while Chile had declared no support at all and had pressed for peace. Furthermore, there was indication in a diplomatic telegram from the British Embassy in Santiago (1) that there was at least the possibility of Chilean support; and there was opinion in Chile, albeit predominantly military, that the Royal Navy would be capable of inflicting severe punishment to the Argentine Navy and that the sinking, for example, of about 2 Argentine warships could be enough to bring about a collapse of the Galtieri regime.

6. In discussion the following points were made:

- a. The favourable result at the United Nations had owed much to the French; King Hussein of Jordan had also given valuable support. However, it was significant that many members of the United Nations Security Council had supported the Argentine case for sovereignty. There was now a need to consider how best to follow-up the successful vote in the Security Council with an approach to allies, and other countries, on arms embargoes and the freezing of assets. The FCO would be giving consideration to a wide range of options.
- b. Confirmation was needed that the Department of Trade had arranged for an order to be passed in Parliament to prevent the contract supply of spares for British equipment bought and operated by Argentina.
- c. It was believed that a new frigate was being built for Argentina in Germany and was now undergoing sea trials. Confirmation of this was required if action was to be taken to persuade the German Authorities to withhold her release to Argentina.

ITEM 2. OWN FORCES

7. Expanding on the Force Tote Sitrep (2), REAR-ADMIRAL BROWN (Assistant Chief of the Defence Staff (Operations)) reported that HMS ENDURANCE was currently South West of South Georgia among the icebergs. Six RAF Hercules

Notes:

1. Santiago Telno 66 of 3 April 1982.
2. COS S12(1)/Force Tote SITREP Issue 5.

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aircraft had so far arrived at Ascension Island, with a flow rate of up to 3 per day now planned until 6 April 1982. Continuing, he reported that the VC10 returning the Governor of the Falkland Islands and the Royal Marine party from Montevideo would stage through Ascension Island tonight. A chartered Belfast aircraft would carry two Wessex 5s to Ascension to assist in the transfer of men and equipment to RFA FORT AUSTIN on 6 April 1982. The LSL SIR TRISTRAM was due at Ascension on 15 April 1982, and action was in hand to obtain approval for blanket use of United States facilities at the base.

ITEM 3. MILITARY APPRECIATION

8. LIEUTENANT GENERAL GLOVER said that he hoped to have a more detailed assessment tomorrow of Argentina's ability to defend the Falklands. He said that, given the airfield limitations, Argentina would become increasingly dependant upon her sea reinforcement capability, and that he also hoped tomorrow to be able to give some indication of the rate of build-up and the implications of cutting the Argentine sea lines of communication.

9. REAR-ADMIRAL BROWN reported that a Preliminary Draft of the military appreciation paper would be available for staffing tomorrow, but that to allow adequate time for staffing it would not be prudent to bring the paper to the Chiefs of Staff before 6 April 1982.

10. THE SECRETARY OF STATE said that he would need to be able to discuss Gibraltar with the Prime Minister on the 5 April 1982. Although he agreed that the whole paper must be staffed as fully as possible, he would require the section on Gibraltar in time for his discussion.

11. In discussion the following points were made:

a. The importance of Chilean airfields was stressed in relation to their use by Nimrod aircraft. These aircraft would be of great benefit to the SSNs in the reduction of target search time.

b. A decision on whether a Chilean base could be used would be required by 8 April 1982 if a Nimrod was to meet the arrival of the first SSN for operations in the Falklands area.

ITEM 4. PUBLIC RELATIONS

12. MR MACDONALD (Deputy Chief of Public Relations) announced that the Falklands issue was a lead story in all the Sunday newspapers and that the political situation, Trident, and the conventional force debate were all likely to remain major interests for some time. The press were anxious to embark

Journalists with the Task Force, and would be asked to nominate 10 tomorrow including a television film crew. It was agreed that journalists wishing to join the force were to do so in the United Kingdom by 1200 on Monday 5 April. Such action would be in the best interests of both the Government and of the media.

13. The SECRETARY OF STATE asked the Chiefs of Staff to give consideration to arranging a number of briefings in the Ministry of Defence for selected Members of Parliament, in particular from the Conservative Defence and Foreign Affairs Committees. However, he acknowledged the considerable difficulties imposed by the need for strict security. Continuing, the Secretary of State said that there could be a requirement on Tuesday 6 April 1982 to brief a larger group of Conservative Members of Parliament, and perhaps some members of the Opposition. In the longer term it was also essential to arrange briefings for Defence Correspondents not embarked with the Task Force.

ITEM 5. DECISIONS REQUIRED

14. The Chiefs of Staff reviewed the forecast of decisions (3) which had been identified.

ITEM 6. ROYAL MARINE SPECIAL BOAT SECTION (SBS)

15. ADMIRAL SIR HENRY LEACH (Chief of the Naval Staff) said that HMS SPARTAN and HMS SPLENDID were already en route for the Falkland Islands; HMS CONQUEROR had not yet sailed. HMS CONQUEROR would have a detachment of the SBS embarked, and one SBS section had already flown to Ascension. It would be possible to divert HMS SPARTAN to Ascension to pick up the SBS Section; however, such action would delay HMS SPARTAN for 24 hours. It was agreed, therefore, that the team should embark in HMS SPLENDID, due at Ascension on the 9 April 1982, which would only delay the passage south by 16 hours.

ITEM 7. LEGAL STATUS

16. The Chiefs of Staff discussed Article 51 of the United Nations Charter on the right of self defence. It was agreed that whilst there was no need to declare war before expelling invasion troops from our own territory, such an answer might not necessarily satisfy public opinion. Furthermore, the terms of Article 51 were not entirely clear in regard to the status of naval forces of the aggressor lying in their own territorial waters. The Chiefs of Staff invited the FCO to investigate the matter further.

Note:

3. Annex A to Paragraph 1 to COS 4th Meeting/82 (attached).

ITEM 8. ARGENTINE PRESENCE IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

17. SIR FRANK COOPER (Permanent Under Secretary of State) said that the whole question of the presence of Argentine ships and aircraft in the United Kingdom needed urgent consideration, and that he would put the matter in hand with the Home Office.

18. Summing up, SIR MICHAEL BEETHAM invited the FCO to give consideration to the options available as a follow up to the United Nations decision; to obtain confirmation of details on the status of the new frigate being built in Germany for Argentina; to investigate further both the possibility of using Chilean airfields and the legal detail of Article 51 of the United Nations Charter; and to arrange clearance for refuelling purposes at Dakar, Freetown and Cape Verde. Continuing, SIR MICHAEL BEETHAM invited the Defence Secretariat to provide the Gibraltar section of the military appreciation paper; and invited the Defence Secretariat, in conjunction with the Assistant Chief of the Defence Staff (Policy) to arrange for briefings for selected Members of Parliament and the Defence Correspondents. Finally, he invited the Permanent Under Secretary of State to speak with the Home Office concerning the Argentine presence in United Kingdom ports and airports.

19. 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	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 (1000) from Argentina.	Ministers	FCO advise that this could be undertaken by routine civilian air services.

ANNEX A TO
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ITEM	ARISING FROM COS MEETING	DECISION REQUIRED	BY	PROGRESS
0008	3/82 Item 4 para 11	Use of facilities at Ascension Island	-	PUS reports no difficulty with blanket use of facilities at Ascension.
0009	4/82 Item 3 para 11	Availability of Chilean airfields	Ministers	FCO are investigating
0010	4/82 Item 5	Movement of HMS ENDURANCE either East or West	COS	ENDURANCE to remain to the South of South Georgia.
0011	4/82 Item 5	Movement of Spearhead Bn and an SAS Sqn	COS	Spearhead Bn to deploy with 3 Cdo Bde. SAS decision out of committee.
0012	4/82 Item 5	Clearance for staging facilities at Dakar, Freetown and Cape Verde.	Ministers	FCO are investigating.
0013	4/82 Item 6 para 15	Positioning of RM SBS	COS	1 section to embark SPLENDID At Ascension; 1 section to embark CONQUEROR
0014	4/82 Item 7 para 16	Clarification of legal aspects of Article 51 of UN Charter	Ministers	FCO are investigating