

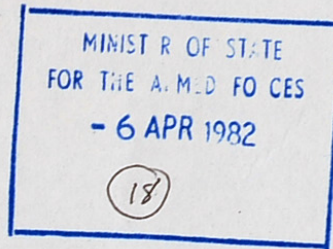
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Minister

(EST)

It would appear  
the 1977 deployment to  
the Falkland's area was  
entirely COVERT.

D/DS5/3/5/71



DAG  
6/4

APS/S of S

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Head of DS 11

FALKLAND ISLANDS: HOUSE OF COMMONS DEBATE

1. I attach the material for tomorrow's debate for which  
you asked in your minute of 4 April. It covers:

1977 Operation

Conduct of Royal Marines

200 mile limit around the Falklands. (to follow)

2. In addition, following Minister(AF)'s meeting yesterday  
morning, I attach also a short speaking note on HMS ENDURANCE;  
it picks up a point made by Mr John Silkin in last Saturday's  
debate.

6 April 1982

*N. H. Nicholls*  
N H NICHOLLS  
Head of DS 5

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1977 OPERATION

Speaking Note

1. The rt hon Member for Devonport referred on 3 April to the despatch in 1977 of a small group of ships to the South Atlantic. This deployment, if kept covert, as the rt hon Member for Devonport has said it was, can hardly have served as a deterrent; nor is it easy to see why it served to strengthen his negotiating hand. If it had been declared, or if the Argentine Government detected its presence, he cannot seriously pretend that a force of this size would have sufficed to forestall an invasion on the scale of last week's blatant aggression against the Falklands.

Supplementary

HOW MANY SHIPS?

Three in all, if pressed Two frigates and a submarine.



## CONDUCT OF ROYAL MARINES

### Speaking Note

1. The rt hon Member for Down South implied that the Royal Marines at Port Stanley had fought with less than their traditional bravery against the Argentine invaders and that they had given in too readily.
2. On the contrary, as members of the House will already know from the first hand account on television by those involved, the 75 strong detachment put up a splendid fight against overwhelming odds. An initial assault on Government House by a large company of troops was repulsed at no loss to the Royal Marines and at the expense of three Argentine losses, two fatal. On being thrown back the Argentines showed no stomach to press their attack until the arrival of a Marine battalion some 600 strong, and equipped with armoured personnel carriers, equipped with cannon, one hour later. The Royal Marines, succeeding in bringing the convoy to a halt by knocking out the leading vehicle and was still successfully defending the residence three hours after the launching of the initial attack.
3. By then the Governor, to whom in his capacity as Commander in Chief the Officer Commanding the Royal Marines detachment was responsible, had come to the conclusion that now that the Argentines had overrun Port Stanley itself there would be a risk of bloodshed and injury to the local population if resistance was continued. He therefore ordered a cease fire.
4. I am sure the House will join me in congratulating the members of Naval Party 8901 for their bravery and determination, which were in the best traditions of the Corps.



1977 OPERATIONBackground Note

1. In November 1977, against the possibility of Argentine military action against the Falklands, the previous Labour Administration authorised the despatch of the frigates HMS PHOEBE and ALACRITY and the SSN DREADNOUGHT to the South Atlantic. The frigates were held 1,000 miles away from the Falklands and HMS DREADNOUGHT conducted submerged patrols off Port Stanley. In the event, no Argentine military intervention took place and the ships returned to the UK in January 1978.

2. The entire operation was kept secret and there is no evidence that the Argentine Government ever became aware of it, much less that it was responsible for restraining the Argentine from military intervention .

3. Mr James Callaghan referred to this deployment in the House on 30 March, while claiming that the facts of the deployment became known. Dr David Owen, who was Foreign Secretary at the time, implied on 3 April that the deployment had been conducted covertly.



CONDUCT OF ROYAL MARINES

Background

Falkland Islands

1. The members of NP 8901 have now been debriefed, on their return to the UK, on the Argentine invasion of 2 April.
2. The Garrison had dug themselves in overnight around the residence and at various points near the likely landing point. At around 0600 local time a large company of SAS-type troops /<sup>carried</sup> the RM Barracks at out an assault, half on/Moody Brook camp (then empty) and half on the Governor's residence. The Royal Marines at the residence succeeded in repelling this assault and, in holding the invaders at bay and badly wounded three of them (two of whom subsequently died).<sup>were</sup>
2. The Argentines/held back until the arrival of a battalion of some 600 Marines, equipped with armoured personnel carriers (APC), an hour later. The leading APC of the column was set on fire and the column halted. The garrison continued to keep the Argentines at arms length and the Governor is understood finally to have ordered a cease fire, at 0925, for fear that injury might be caused to the civilian population of Port Stanley.
3. Seven members of the detachment succeeded in escaping into the hinterland but are reported now to have been tracked down.

South Georgia

3. No direct account has yet been received of the Argentine attack on Grytviken on 3 April. But it appears that the 22 strong party, which included RN, as well as RM, personnel, put up a good fight. In particular, they appeared to have shot down a Puma helicopter and to have held the Argentine Corvette then offshore with a handheld anti-tank weapon. The party's precise whereabouts are not yet known, but they may be on an Argentinian vessel, en route for Buenos Aires.



4. In his speech in the debate on the Falklands on 3 April, Mr Powell made disparaging remarks about the conduct of the Royal Marines at Port Stanley.



Supplementary

ANY NEWS OF MARINES  
ON SOUTH GEORGIA?

We have not yet received a direct account of the invasion of South Georgia. But there has been press reports that the Royal Marines succeeded in shooting down a Puma helicopter and holing the side of a Argentine Corvette with a hand held anti tank weapon. Here again, it would appear that the Royal Marines put up a good fight.

WHEREABOUTS OF  
ROYAL MARINES ON  
SOUTH GEORGIA?

BAS EMPLOYEES?

*Recent reports  
indicate they  
are being  
moved to  
Argentina*

The whereabouts of the Royal Marines is still uncertain. British Antarctic Survey civilians are still on South Georgia. [If pressed] The International Red Cross, in conjunction with the Swiss authorities, have been asked to seek confirmation on humanitarian grounds.



ARGENTINE ENCOURAGED TO INVADE BY DECISION TO PAY OFF  
ENDURANCE (Mr Silkin)

Speaking Note

1. The rt hon Member for Deptford suggested that the Argentines have been encouraged to invade the Falklands by the news of last year's decision to withdraw HMS ENDURANCE from service. I find this a curious argument. ENDURANCE, for all the useful work that she has carried out over the year, does not possess an appreciable military capability and would not in herself have constituted a deterrent to an invasion on the scale launched by the Argentine last week. In any case, she operated in the South Atlantic for only half a year and in the immediate vicinity of the Falklands for only some 30 days a year. Had it not been for the events on South Georgia, ENDURANCE would by now be on her way home to the United Kingdom. If ENDURANCE had been seen by the Argentines as a deterrent, they would surely have waited until she had left the area.



Minister

The Department's suggestion  
for tomorrow's debate  
cover Dr Owen's point.

(E54)

200 MILE ZONE

Speaking Note

1. In the debate in this House on 3 April, the rt hon the Member for Devonport suggested that we should declare a 200 mile limit around the Falklands and that the Royal Navy should take offensive action against any Argentine vessel which ventured into the zone.
2. All sorts of options are, open should the Argentine refuse to withdraw its forces from the Falkland Islands. Declaration of some kind of zone around the Islands is of course one such option.



200 MILE ZONEBackground Note

1. In the debate in the House on 3 April, Dr David Owen proposed that the US should declare her rights to a 200-mile limit around the Falkland Islands and that the Royal Navy should take action against any Argentine vessel appearing within that limit. This, he said, was perfectly compatible with international law.
2. There are precedents during war or periods of hostilities for declaring war zones; the precise area involved and the regime within it would have to depend on and be appropriate to the circumstances. The Chiefs of Staff have not ruled out exclusion zones as a means of dealing with the Falklands crisis.
3. Other options such as extending our territorial sea claims around the Falklands or claiming a 200-mile Exclusive Economic Zone have few attractions.
4. There is no international agreement on the breadth of the territorial sea, though the UK continues to assert that a limit of 3 nautical miles remains valid under customary international law. The draft United Nations Law of the Sea Conference (UNLOSC) Convention would give states the right to claim up to 12 nautical miles. Many states already claim such a limit; some, including Argentina, claim as much as 200 miles, but the UK has resolutely refused to recognise these claims and herself claims only 3 miles (although we have publicly stated our commitment to extend to 12 miles, preferably in the context of an international agreement at UNLOSC). A sudden extension to 200 miles around the Falklands would therefore be totally inconsistent with our longstanding policy, would represent an affront to UNLOSC, and might tempt other nationals at UNLOSC to change aspects of the draft Convention currently satisfactory to us. Furthermore



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(E57)

LOOSE MINUTE

D/DS4/92/4/1 (188/82)

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MINISTER OF STATE  
FOR THE ARMED FORCES  
- 6 APR 1982

FALKLAND ISLANDS - HOUSE OF COMMONS DEBATE

1. As requested I attach a passage on future maritime policy in the light of the Argentine invasion of the Falkland Islands for S of S's consideration. I also attach supplementary points. We are rereading the Hansard of last Saturday and if any further points occur to us I will let you know.
2. I am minuting you separately about the size of the RN in 1977 as compared with today.

*A J Cragg*

6 Apr 82

A J CRAGG  
Head of DS4  
MB 5109 3078 MB



Review of the Defence Programme

Some may suggest that as a result of the invasion of the Falkland Islands we should reconsider the plans which we announced last June. We have always made it clear that the implementation of the strategy would proceed flexibly and that a great deal of work lay ahead in shaping the details. But, this said, the framework was constructed only after the most careful thought and in the light of all the considerations including our future role beyond NATO's formal boundaries in terms both of our national interests and our obligations to the Alliance.

Out of Area Capability

The main strategic maritime threat to our nation comes from the Soviet Navy in the Atlantic. But we have always recognised that the Royal Navy has a particularly valuable role to play in operations and deployments outside the NATO area. We stressed this in our review. In practical terms too the record shows our acceptance of our special duty in efforts of this kind. Since the beginning of the conflict between Iraq and Iran in 1980 a British maritime presence has been maintained continuously in the Indian Ocean by warships on rotation. We intend also to continue to send groups of ships on long deployments for exercises and visits in the Caribbean, Indian Ocean and beyond. At the same time it must now be clear that we have the ability and the resolve to assemble and deploy a formidable task force to protect our wider interests. I cannot, therefore, accept any suggestion that we did not take full account of our wider interests in framing our future maritime strategy.

Post Review Capability

As for the future, we intend to sustain a strong and effective Navy. A major ship construction programme is currently in train. Many aspects of its fighting capability are being greatly improved. In the last few months we have announced a further order for a Type 22 frigate - the eighth of the class; tenders for the next SSN - the seventeenth in the series; improvements to the Sea Wolf missile system; a new heavyweight torpedo; and orders for the Sea Eagle anti-ship missile. After the two superpowers, our naval capability will remain second to none.



## SUPPLEMENTARY SPEAKING NOTES

### 1. Impact of Trident on Naval Budget? Trident responsible for cuts?

We conducted the Review last year because our equipment budget was over-extended in spite of the increased resources available - and this before we had begun to spend significant amounts on Trident. Even without Trident a review would have been necessary to bring our conventional weapons back into line with the resources available. It is absurd to suggest that our capability to respond to the present crisis was affected by Trident. The strength of the task force now at sea demonstrates the absurdity of such an argument.

### 2. Longer term implications of Trident?

We took the Trident decision against the background of our overall defence capability. It will be managed under the Royal Navy but it is not right to conclude that without Trident the naval programme would have looked different. If pressed: We have not yet decided what the size of the naval budget will be in the late-1980s and early-1990s so I cannot predict how much of it will be absorbed by Trident.

### 3. Need for more warship orders?

We are in the middle of a major warship construction programme with 25 vessels plus 4 SSNs on order worth £2000+m in all. This year we have placed orders worth £460m. We shall continue with the SSN programme, as we announced in Cmnd 8288, building up to 17 by the end of the decade. We are also pressing ahead with the next generation of conventional patrol submarine and a new class of simpler, cheaper anti-submarine frigate (the Type 23). For home waters we aim to build up a balanced mine-countermeasures Fleet. Our plans include: more Hunt Class vessels, new minesweepers based on a trawler design and a new class of smaller, cheaper single role minehunter.

### 4. Need for more carriers for out of area deployments?

We shall be retaining a permanent force level of two carriers throughout the 1980s and beyond. INVINCIBLE is not due to go until ILLUSTRIOUS enters service; and HERMES will be retained until ARK ROYAL joins the Fleet.



Would we have been able to assemble an effective task force if the cuts had already been completed?

In the mid-1980s the Fleet will consist of a wide range of efficient deep-sea vessels including among others two carriers and assault ships, some fourteen nuclear powered submarines and a range of destroyers and frigates of which the majority will be advanced Type 42 destroyers and Type 22 frigates and modernised Leanders. New weapons will be entering service soon including the Sub-Harpoon submarine-launched missile, the Sea Skua air-launched anti-ship missile and the Stingray lightweight torpedo. Others such as Sea Eagle and the heavyweight torpedo are in the pipeline. The answer therefore is an emphatic 'yes' - we shall maintain a substantial capability to conduct maritime operations both inside and beyond NATO's boundaries.



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BACKGROUND NOTE

1. Cmnd 8288 of June 1981 outlined the outcome of the Government's reappraisal of the defence programme. Its general thrust was to sustain our effort on the Central Front while accepting a reduction in the size of the surface Fleet to about 50 destroyers and frigates and a substantial cut in the Royal Navy's infrastructure involving the closure of Chatham Dockyard, a major reduction of Portsmouth, and the rationalisation of the training and support field. The extent to which we are likely to be able to sustain a force level of 50 destroyers and frigates will depend on decisions in LTC 82 about running on older ships in the short term and sustaining the necessary build-rate of new ships (Type 22s and 23s) in the longer term.
2. The White Paper also made it clear that the nuclear powered submarine Fleet would build up to 17 and that we would retain only two of the three new ASW carriers in service. Since its publication, plans to sell HMS INVINCIBLE (the first of the class) to Australia have been announced. On the other hand the two Commando assault ships - also due for disposal - have now been reprieved. S of S also hinted in evidence to HCDC that SSN 19 might be ordered before the Trident submarines pre-empt the facilities at Vickers.
3. Cmnd 8288 also made it clear that the Alliance had recognised that it was increasingly necessary to look to Western security interests beyond the NATO area. It stressed that Britain's own needs, outlook and interests gave her a special role in efforts of this kind; and underlined the Royal Navy's capability to participate in out of area deployments. A copy of the relevant extract is attached.

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### Beyond the NATO Area

32. As the Alliance collectively has acknowledged, changes in many areas of the world, together with growing Soviet military reach and readiness to exploit it directly or indirectly, make it increasingly necessary for NATO members to look to Western security concerns over a wider field than before, and not to assume that these concerns can be limited by the boundaries of the Treaty area. Britain's own needs, outlook and interests give her a special role and a special duty in efforts of this kind.

33. Military effort cannot be the sole instrument, but it has inevitably a part to play. The Government intends to sustain and where appropriate expand our activities by way of military assistance, advice, training, loan of personnel and provision of equipment to friendly countries whose security benefits from our help. But help in these ways needs increasingly to be backed by the ability of our own forces to act directly if our friends need us. Many elements of our Services have basic characteristics of flexibility and mobility which make them well suited for this without need for much extra expense or expansion. The Government intends to exploit them more fully, and to make plans and provision accordingly.

34. The Royal Navy has a particularly valuable role. For example, since the conflict broke out last year between Iran and Iraq a maritime presence has been maintained continuously in the Indian Ocean, with warships on rotation supported by fleet auxiliaries. We intend to resume from 1982 onwards the practice of sending a substantial naval task group on long detachment for visits and exercises in the South Atlantic, Caribbean, Indian Ocean or further east. We intend to make particular use of the new carriers, with Sea Harriers and helicopters, in out-of-area deployment. We will coordinate all these deployments and exercises as fruitfully as possible with the United States and other allies, as well as with local countries with whom we have close defence relations.