



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

DEFENCE OPERATIONS EXECUTIVE

MINUTES of a Meeting held in Room 5301, Ministry of Defence, Main Building, Whitehall, on WEDNESDAY 7 APRIL 1982 at 10.00 am

ITEM 1. INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENT

1. The Executive were given an intelligence update. The principal points were:

CHIEF OF DEFENCE STAFF

DATE	CORPS
	CDS
	CNS
	CGS
	HM SCDS (AF)
	CAS
	SCDS A 1
	SECCOS
	VCDS (P&L)
	HM SCDS (B)
	DCDS (I)
	SCDS B 1
	DCDS (OR)
	SPC
	ACDS (CS)
	ADC
	ACDS (P)
	O/CDS
	ACDS (P&C)
	A/CDS
	ACDS (S)
FILE:	DS SEC
	7038/1

Naval Forces.

(1) There have been changes in Argentine Command and Control, including the establishment of an Atlantic Theatre Command.

(2) The Chilean Navy has increased its state of readiness.

Ground Forces. The strength of the Argentine Ground Forces on the Falkland Islands remains unclear. However, it was assessed that approximately 5-8000 troops could be supported logistically on the Islands almost indefinitely, provided associated accommodation problems were resolved.

c. Port Stanley Airfield. The DIS were ready to present their revised assessment of the operational capacity of the airfield at Stanley on request. It was now assessed that the condition of the airfield was considerably better than had been originally thought, and could be capable of operations for up to three months without major maintenance.

d. Argentine Air Threat. It was assessed that the Argentine Air Force could pose a more serious threat to our own forces than had been originally estimated.

Note by the Secretary

Revised assessment of the Argentine Air Threat (1) has been produced.

Note:

- 1. DCDS(I) 26 dated 7 April 1982.

2. The Executive agreed that DCDS(I) should be invited to present the revised assessment of Stanley airfield to the Chiefs of Staff at their next meeting that afternoon.

3. It was becoming apparent that there were significant differences between US and UK intelligence assessments, particularly with regard to the capabilities of the Argentine Air Force.

4. There was some evidence to suggest that Islanders were being prevented from leaving the Falkland Islands.

ITEM 2. OWN FORCES

5. The Executive were informed on the current status of our forces (2).

ITEM 3. PUBLIC RELATIONS

6. The Executive were informed on the day's media reports.

7. In discussion the Executive noted that space and communications facilities for representatives of the media with the Task Force was limited. Urgent attention needed to be given to plans to provide facilities for those not with the Task Force. Furthermore, consideration was being given by DCPR to the setting up of a drop point at Ascension Island to speed up transmission of reports. There was a danger that if fast and efficient coverage was not provided by us, the media would use Argentine material with all the propaganda overtones involved.

ITEM 4. RELEASE OF INFORMATION

8. The Executive discussed the associated problem of controlling the security of information, while at the same time ensuring that sufficient information was made available to those entitled to receive it. There was a requirement to keep:

- a. Missions and Embassies, including their defence staffs, in touch. This called for close liaison with the FCO, to ensure that both military and diplomatic staffs received compatible advice. Coordination within the MOD would be undertaken by ACDS(Pol) in conjunction with AUS(D Staff).

Note:

2. Force Tote Sitrep (issue 11).

b. UK Commanders briefed, especially those who had no need to know in depth our plans and intentions, which would also be undertaken by ACDS(Pol) in conjunction with AUS(D Staff).

c. Members of Parliament and the media briefed. The Executive noted that PUS had instructed DUS(N) to exercise overall control of this.

9. It was also essential that the internal MOD passage of information was kept under review and that security was maintained. The DSC complex was the centre for all information. Service operation rooms were to inform the DSC Controller of any important points, and the DSC Controller was responsible for ensuring that:

a. COSSEC was informed of any information that should be passed to the Chiefs of Staff.

b. DCPR was informed of any matter which could require the preparation of a defensive brief, however minor.

c. That the information was suitably displayed to enable members of the Staffs and the Secretariat to brief themselves.

10. It was noted that ACDS(Pol) and AUS(D Staff) would brief the Chiefs of Staff that afternoon on the release of information to our officials overseas.

ITEM 5. SECURITY

11. The Executive discussed briefly the security implications of disclosing estimates of Argentine strengths and details of our Task Force. They agreed that operational considerations militated against the publication of any figures of Argentine strengths. On the one hand, disclosure risked exposing the inadequacy of our intelligence, while on the other it could result in limits being placed on Commanders freedom of action whether the estimates were high or low. The Executive invited AUS(D Staff) and the FCO to take note of their views.

Note by the Secretary

Falkland Island Debate - a note has been circulated (3).

Note:

3. MO 5/21 dated 7 April 1982.

ITEM 6. MEETINGS

12. The Executive agreed that any future meetings should if possible start at 1000 so that all members could see a television briefing at 0930.

DOE 4th Meeting/82
7 April 1982

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ACAS(Ops) (represented by D of D Ops(AS)(RAF))	13 - 15

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