

FC 142

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DP 9/82



AN APPRECIATION OF THE OPTIONS FOR LANDING
OPERATIONS IN THE FALKLAND ISLANDS
REVIEW OF THE SITUATION DP 9/82 DRAFT

1. The attached draft position paper has been produced by C Division, DPS.
2. Comments, preferably in the form of specific amendments, and 2 star clearance are requested.
3. Comments/Clearance should be sent by 1400 hrs 13 Apr 82 to:

Group Captain M C A Davies
Colonel M J Evans

CHIEF OF DEFENCE STAFF

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Attachment: DP 9/82 (Draft) dated 13 Apr 82

13 Apr 82

PSO/COS

This reaches some
unsurprising conclusions.
Some important points
are missed - hope
they'll be covered in the
final version.

Copy No

1 13 Apr.

Incl
(A)

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18

where did
the Gaucho's
land?

↓
PSO/COS

As far as we can
gather so far:

a. By helicopter South
of Moody Brook Camp
and the Governor's House,
and into the Airport.

b. By Antracite into
Taka Bay, North of
the Airport.

14 Apr.

Incl
(A)

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P 9/82 (DRAFT)

13 April 1982

CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE STAFF
AN APPRECIATION OF THE OPTIONS FOR
LANDING OPERATIONS IN THE FALKLAND ISLANDS
REVIEW OF THE SITUATION

1. On 11 Apr 82, the Argentine ground forces deployed in the Falkland Islands were assessed, on current information, to number between 5000 and 5500. The force comprises a reinforced Brigade of 5 or 6 battalions with artillery and armoured reconnaissance support and possibly a limited surface to air missile and anti-aircraft artillery capability. A small number of armed troop lift helicopters, light ground attack, anti-submarine warfare and transport aircraft were deployed at Port Stanley airfield. One frigate was on patrol in the Falkland Islands' vicinity, and five transports were in harbour or nearby. Overall strengths and capabilities of the Argentine forces have been assessed by the Defence Intelligence Staff.(1).

2. A maritime exclusion zone has been established around the Falkland Islands with effect from 12 Apr 82. Argentinian warships and naval auxiliaries within the zone will be regarded as hostile and liable to attack. No decision has been taken whether or when to extend the application of the exclusion zone to merchant shipping and to civil or military aircraft. Hence the Argentinians retain the capability to reinforce and resupply by air and merchant shipping unopposed.

Note:

1. DCDS(I)26 dated 7 Apr 82.

3. The UK Task Force comprises: 2 Aircraft Carriers, 5 Destroyers, 7 Frigates, one Assault Ship, 5 Logistics Ships, 10 Royal Fleet Auxiliaries and a number of ships from trade, including: the SS Canberra (troopship), the SS Uganda (hospital ship), and the Elk (RO-RO). 3 Commando Brigade, 3rd Battalion Parachute Regiment, squadron SAS, SBS, plus armoured reconnaissance and supporting elements are embarked. Aircraft and helicopters embarked include: 20 Sea Harrier, 34 Sea King (12 commando), 8 Wessex (2 Gunships), 12 Lynx (5 Sea Skua), 4 Wasp, 5 Scout and 9 Gazelle. Substantial numbers of landing craft are deployed with amphibious ships.

FACTORS AFFECTING THE SELECTION

OF THE AIM

4. HMG's express policy aim is to bring about the withdrawal of Argentine forces from the Falkland Islands and the re-establishment of British administration. Diplomatic efforts continue and economic sanctions have been imposed; but HMG remains committed to forcible ejection if all else fails.

5. The over-riding requirements to minimise civilian casualties and, to a lesser extent, the destruction of property, precludes a direct assault against Argentine forces concentrated on Stanley.

AIM

6. The aim of this appreciation is to assess the various military options for putting a force ashore in the Falkland Islands, with a view to repossessing the islands.

ASSUMPTIONS

7. For the purposes of this appreciation it is assumed that before a landing on the Falkland Islands was contemplated:

- a. South Georgia had been retaken.
- b. An effective sea/air Exclusion Zone had been established round the islands.

FACTORS

Timing

8. Elements of the Task Force capable of implementing fully an air and maritime exclusion zone could arrive in the Falkland Islands area by 29 Apr 82.

9. The timing of a landing operation will be determined by passage time and by the maximum length time troops may remain at sea and retain fitness to fight. The latter is assessed to be 21 days, without a short spell ashore.

10. The amphibious force is scheduled to arrive at Ascension Island on 19 Apr 82 to embark combat and logistic elements. A four day period has been proposed for exercise and rehearsal. The Falkland Islands are 11 days steaming from Ascension Island. On this basis the earliest landing date would be 4 May 82 and the latest 14 May 82.

11. Holding the amphibious force at Ascension for up to a maximum of one month would make the latest landing date 10 Jun 82. Alternatively,

*Exercise
on
ASI?*

the force could use sheltered anchorages in South Georgia, 4 days steaming from the Falkland Islands. Combining these two options would extend the latest date to the last week of Jul 82; increased risk of damage from icebergs in the South Georgia area being the limiting factor.

12. Deductions. Landing operations could be contemplated during the period 4 May 82 to last week in Jul 82. This would cater for extended operations which might be needed to establish an effective exclusion zone or for prolonged negotiations. However, delay would allow the Argentine forces longer to:

- a. Reinforce and resupply by means not subject to exclusion.
- b. Prepare defences.
- c. Improve Port Stanley airfield, airstrips and other internal lines of communication.
- d. Prepare for winter operations.

Morale on both sides could suffer.

Weather

13. The weather in the Falkland Islands is unpredictable. Stormy weather is frequent in late April and winter sets in in mid-May. Prevailing winds are westerly. Mean speeds are of the order of 15 knots and exceed 21 knots for 60-70% of the time. Gales occur on 5 days per month. Day temperatures in April/May at 40°F dropping to below freezing at night. Chill factors are high. Rainfalls on 18 days each month; snow occurs on 10 days a month in June and July but rarely

lies for long. Visibility is generally good below an overcast with cloud bases 1500-2000 ft; breaks in cloud occur at night.

14. Deductions. With the onset of winter the weather will:

- But 2/3 of
Cds Bde are
M+ are trained.*
- a. Pose morale and survival problems for troops in the open, especially on high ground.
 - b. Lead to Argentine deployments being concentrated in the immediate area of settlements, particularly Port Stanley, where accommodation exists for uncommitted troops.
 - c. Severely inhibit parachute operations.
 - d. Limit daylight satellite and air reconnaissance.

→ ? Affect vehicle mobility on most tracks.

Close air support operations should be possible for much of the time, while helicopter operations could be limited by gales. The swell built up by strong westerly winds would create extensive rollers and surf on exposed ^(Western?) coasts precluding, or making hazardous, amphibious landings and small boat operations.

Ground

15. East and West Falklands are separated by the Falkland sound (2-12 miles wide). Together the area is similar to that of Wales. The coastline is deeply indented providing many potential landing areas.

16. East Falkland has a range of hills running west to east in the north; movement north to south is restricted to a few passes. To the north of the hills the ground is soft peat bog, while to the south it comprises flat grasslands and peat bog.

17. West Falkland has a range of hills along the east coast; the ground is less boggy than in East Falkland.

18. There are no roads outside the immediate vicinity of Stanley. Tracks exist which are passable by land rover; progress is slow and, without detailed local knowledge, the risk of vehicles becoming bogged down is considerable. Movement between coastal settlements relies on bridges capable of supporting vehicles no heavier than a land rover.

19. Deductions.

a. Surface vehicular movement would be difficult and slow, and limited mainly to land rovers. The BV 202 (BM oversnow troop transport) may provide an additional cross country capability; it could not use the majority of bridges but could by-pass them, though the swim capability is untried and therefore risky. It is likely, therefore, that vehicles and equipment not transported by helicopter would be confined to the Stanley area or the point of landing.

[affected?]

b. Movement on foot is limited by boggy ground, swollen streams and rock runs on high ground.

c. Helicopter landing sites can be found on hard beaches, inland on drier ground in most areas, except the rock runs.

d. Cover for movement on high ground is good, but exposed on the plains.

e. Numerous beaches exist which may be suitable for landing operations. Those exposed to the westerly winds will be

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e. Numerous beaches exist which may be suitable for landing operations. Those exposed to the westerly winds will be

prone to rollers and surf. Few, if any, offer rapid access inland. Kelp concentrations could be a limiting factor.

Detailed reconnaissance for beach composition, gradient, off-lying dangers and enemy defences, including mines, would be essential. Strong tidal streams could cause problems for small boat or "swim" operations.

f. Tactical mobility, including the deployment of artillery, and logistic support will depend primarily on helicopter lift, supplemented where possible by boat. [and fat?]

g. The size of the islands precludes complete ground surveillance by OPs. It may well be possible, therefore, to achieve an unobserved amphibious landing, particularly if the approach is by night.

h. Given the politico/military importance of Stanley, its harbour and airfield, and the accommodation it offers, indicates that Argentine defences will be concentrated on the area. The ring of hills dominating Stanley will be of particular tactical significance, and will probably be the site for OPs and major defensive positions/fire bases.

Relative Strengths : Maritime/Air

20. Numerically the Argentine Navy is marginally inferior to the UK task force. Its strength lies in its anti-ship capability, with 8 ship armed with EXOCET missiles and in its 2 fast, quiet, well-armed German submarines. The maritime capability is enhanced by A4 aircraft embarked in a carrier. Its weaknesses are assessed to be in tactical training, logistic support, ocean surveillance, lack of airborne

SBS —
essential
advance force.

early warning capability and equipment unreliability. The deductions below draw on the Navy Department's detailed assessment (2) of relative capabilities, and Air Force Department studies (3).

21. Deductions.

a. Sub-Surface Operations.

(1) The Argentine Type 209 submarine could pose a threat to UK SSNs if it was able to close short range; if well-handled the Type 209 would present a difficult target for UK SSNs.

(2) The UK Task Group's anti-submarine capability should be effective against the Argentine Guppy class submarines, but less so against well-handled Type 209s. The latter, equipped with long range torpedoes pose a threat to UK surface units, though the Type 182 towed decoy should afford protection. UK SSNs would risk detection in attacking Argentine major units but should be able to evade.

(3) The Argentine Navy is unlikely to have a submarine mining capability. Subject to mines being made available, UK SSNs could lay a small offensive minefield.

b. Surface Operations.

(1) Superior EXOCET tactics and more modern gunnery systems should give the UK Task Groups advantage over the Argentine surface fleet.

Notes:

2. D/DNW/97/3/10 dated 7 Apr 82.
3. D/AFCOps/TF10 dated 11 Apr 82.

(2) The Argentine Navy has 7 gun armed fast patrol boats. It is doubtful if weather conditions at this time of year would permit transit to the Falkland Islands. If some could be deployed they would pose a threat to amphibious landings. UK missile armed helicopters should provide an effective counter.

c. Anti-Aircraft Operations. The UK Task Group is well equipped for area and point air defence. At the limits and beyond of Argentine land based air cover the Task Group should be secure from air attack; it would be vulnerable in areas where sustained attacks from land based air were possible. The Argentine fleet is more vulnerable to air attack; it has few effective medium range surface to air missiles or point defence missile systems, and relies primarily on outdated and probably ineffective gun systems; surface units would, therefore, be vulnerable to air attack.

d. UK Air Operations.

(1) The UK Task Group's organic surface and sub-surface surveillance and attack capability is limited.

(2) From Ascension Island, at high risk, limited tactical photographic reconnaissance of the Falkland Islands might just be possible.

*the Vulcan /
Victor idea.*

e. Argentine Air Operations.

(1) A limited inflight refuelling capability exists.

(2) From the airfield at Puerto Madryn and those further south, the Argentine Air Force could mount air defence and attack operations in the western sector of the exclusion zone. Operations in the Eastern maritime sector would be confined to the Canberra force. Stanley is near the practical maximum unrefuelled radius of action of all Argentine offensive air except the Canberra.

(3) The effectiveness of air operations would be limited by poor maritime surveillance and restricted air defence radar cover. The positioning of a TPS 43 radar at Port Stanley would largely overcome the latter deficiency.

(4) Carrier borne aircraft could pose a threat to the UK Task Group, particularly if EXOCET armed Super Etandard aircraft become operational by late April. Air defence operations are likely to be limited by air search radar maintenance problems. Night, poor weather and co-ordinated operations are unlikely to be effective given the poor state of training.

22. Conclusions.

- a. The UK Task Group could operate with relative immunity in the eastern sector of the exclusion zone, provided the Argentines had not been able to improve Stanley airfield to support offensive air operations.
- b. The UK Task Group would be at increasing risk as the western boundary of the exclusion zone was approached. The vulnerability of major units in this area would preclude the fully effective implementation of the exclusion zone.
- c. Local sea and air superiority could be established to allow amphibious and/or helicopter assault landings on the Falkland Islands; East Falkland presents the least problem in this respect. The lack of a mine detection/mine clearance capability could prove a major deficiency.
- d. UK land based maritime reconnaissance and offensive air would greatly increase the UK Task Groups freedom of action and reduce significantly its vulnerability.

Relative Strengths : Land Forces

23. The Argentine land forces deployed are numerically superior to those embarked on the UK Task Group. Argentine supporting arms are likely to include 81 mm mortars, artillery (105mm and possibly, though unlikely, 155mm) BLOWPIPE, TIGERCAT and OERLIKON anti-aircraft systems; the latter have a daylight, fair weather capability only, and the number of launchers and missiles deployed is likely to be limited (eg 4-6 BLOWPIPE posts with 20-30 missiles). These systems have a significant capability against helicopters but are likely to be

deployed primarily in support of Argentine concentrations in the Stanley area. Some may, however, be sited forward or be held as part of a quick reaction force. Argentine freedom of action will depend on a solution being found to the provision of adequate aviation fuel supplies, and a substantial increase to their current holdings of helicopters.

24. The UK Amphibious Force is equipped with organic artillery and air defence weapons. Tactical mobility, training standards, employment tactics, and system reliability should be superior to those of the Argentine forces. But this would be balanced by the time available to the Argentine forces to prepare forward positions, defences, shelters and internal lines of communication.

25. Deductions. The UK Amphibious Force has the capability to counter Argentine forces deployed forward from Stanley. With local air and sea superiority established an amphibious and/or helicopter landing could be achieved with minimal casualties if mounted outside the engagement zones of the Argentine air defence and heavy support weapons which are likely to be concentrated on Stanley. Since, a direct assault on Argentine concentrations around Stanley is precluded by the need to minimise civilian casualties numerical inferiority is not a major consideration.

Sustainability

26. The UK forces embarked have war maintenance reserves for 30 days at limited war consumption rates. Given the extended supply lines it would be prudent to cater for a higher rate of consumption from the outset; resupply should, therefore, be available after 20 days.

Correct

Ammunition could be provided only from stocks held in the UK and BAOR against Priority 1 requirements, principally UKMF(L).

27. No 5 Infantry Brigade could be earmarked to reinforce or relieve the initial assault force. The Brigade would be deficient in CLANSMAN radios and significantly cold weather clothing.

28. Major repair will present problems. Accommodation will be required in the longer term.

29. Deductions.

a. Resupply for the initial assault force would have to leave UK 6 days before the first landing (ie by 28 Apr 82 if landing made at earliest possible time).

b. The deployment of elements of No 5 Infantry Brigade should not be considered unless adequate cold weather equipment could be made available.

c. Prolonged operations could create serious deficiencies in priority one stocks, some of which could take 18 months to replace.

d. Prolonged operations could cause major problems of equipment maintenance, repair and replacement.

MORALE

30. Morale is likely to be a significant factor. Despite reinforcement and improved defences, morale among the Argentine troops deployed

in the Falkland Islands is likely to deteriorate as worsening weather takes its toll and equipment deficiencies are revealed. The knowledge that a strong, well trained, well equipped, British Task Force is approaching is likely to lead to increasing apprehension, especially among young conscripts. This apprehension would be heightened by:

- a. An increasingly effective blockade.
- b. The successful re-occupation of South Georgia.
- c. Advance force operations.

31. A successful British landing, followed by individual operations against Argentine out-posts could have a marked effect on Argentine morale. Effective isolation of the force, inability of mainland based aircraft and naval forces to provide support could seriously undermine the Argentine will to resist. Latin temperament suggests that it is unlikely that adversity would harden the resolve of the defending forces.

32. Deduction. Argentine morale is likely to be at its lowest ebb at the time when it is anticipated that a British landing could take place. Should the landing be deferred overlong British morale could suffer and the Argentine forces could perceive a lack of British resolve.

ENEMY COURSES

33. The Argentine forces are likely to take advantage of the time available before the arrival of UK Task Groups in the Falkland Islands area to:

- a. Upgrade Stanley airfield facilities and aviation fuel storage.
- b. Stockpile war maintenance reserves.
- c. Improve internal communications and supply lines.
- d. Establish defensive positions and landing obstructions, including mining.
- e. Deploy additional forces, particularly helicopters, heavy weapons and, subject to airfield improvements, offensive air and air defence aircraft.

what do they mean? arty? eng? bde? sigs?

34. Three Argentine Regiments are likely to be deployed in the Stanley area, with others in Lafonia and West Falkland. Artillery and air defence weapons could be deployed tactically to increase coverage, and a quick reaction force could be formed relying on helicopters for tactical mobility.

35. It is unlikely that Argentine surface naval units will penetrate the maritime exclusion zone until an assault operation is judged imminent, nor is it likely that the Argentine fleet will seek to intercept the UK Task Group well in advance of its arrival in the Falkland Islands area. Naval operations are, therefore, likely to be confined initially to surveillance, shadowing and, perhaps, sub-surface harassment. Air, sub-surface and surface launched missile attacks could be expected if the Task Group entered the Argentine exclusion zone.

36. Should the Argentine Navy avoid being drawn into combat in

contesting the UK exclusion zone the force would be intact to counter a British landing. However, given the very considerable impact the loss of a major unit would have on domestic public opinion, the Argentine Navy may be reluctant to put these ships at risk. Reaction may, therefore, be limited to minor surface units, submarines, fast patrol boats (if deployed to the Falklands), air attacks from mainland and island based offensive air and military action by the Argentine garrison.

[No mention of the fierce inter-service rivalry - Argentina]

OWN COURSES

37. Own courses of action are constrained by: the ability to establish sea and air superiority, the ability to obtain tactical intelligence of enemy dispositions and the suitability of beaches and landing sites, and the rate of building of forces ashore and their subsequent support.

38. Sea and Air Superiority. There is a high degree of confidence that the Task Group could establish sea and air superiority over the Falkland Islands. The ability to do so in the Western extremes of the exclusion zone is less certain in the absence of UK air support from airfields in Chile. However, this deficiency would not affect the choice of landing options significantly. The achievement of this superiority might require counter-air operations against Stanley airfield in advance of a landing.

39. Intelligence. Knowledge of enemy dispositions could be achieved by covert or overt means. SBS or SAS operations would be covert and would have the benefit of retaining the maximum degree of surprise;

but problems exist in the covert landing of special forces. Visual air reconnaissance by carrier based aircraft would be the alternative, but an element of surprise could be lost. Beach and landing site reconnaissance could be conducted only by special forces; these forces could also:

a. Act as pathfinders. *[They must in marginal conditions at night]*

✓ b. Assist in target acquisition for Naval Gunfire Support and air to ground attacks.

✓ c. Create diversions.

✓ d. Take direct action against key elements of the Argentine Garrison; helicopters, aircraft stockpiles etc.

✓ e. Conduct "coup de main" operations.

→ ? f. *Continue to gain intelligence for follow-up operations*

40. Ship to Shore Mobility. Ship to shore mobility could be limited by strong winds and high sea states. Given favourable conditions a simultaneous two company lift would be possible, while a further 3 companies could be landed concurrently and simultaneously using available landing craft. A force of some 1700 could be landed within one hour, more than adequate to counter the likely response of Argentine quick reaction forces. A lesser force might be capable of securing a beach head, thereby allowing the force ashore the maximum helicopter support for tactical mobility and resupply.

Landing Options

41. With the exception of the immediate area around Stanley and other areas within the known engagement zones of Argentine heavy

✓ weapons, unopposed landings could be achieved on both East and West Falkland. Prevailing winds and sea states are, however, likely to preclude landings on exposed western coasts. Three principal options exist:

- a. West Falkland.
- b. Lafonia.
- c. North of East Falkland.

42. West Falkland.

a. Advantages.

- (1) Minimal opposition, unopposed landing possible.
- (2) Better ground and cover for deployed troops.
- (3) Maximum distance from quick reaction forces likely to be based at Stanley.
- (4) Minimal risk of civilian casualties in ensuing operations.

b. Disadvantages.

(1) Greatest vulnerability to mainland based offensive air. *[Pretty marginal argument!]*

✓ (2) No direct pressure on the main Argentine force at Stanley.

✓ (3) Subsequent move to East Falkland would be exposed and have to cross a considerable water gap.

43. Lafonia. (Southern half of East Falklands)

a. Advantages.

- (1) Light opposition, but unopposed landing still possible.
- (2) Minimal risk of civilian casualties.
- (3) It would create some direct pressure on the main Argentine force.

b. Disadvantages.

- (1) Cover for deployed troops is poor; ground is difficult.
- (2) Surface movement to ground of strategic importance near Stanley constrained by water obstacles and high terrain inland. [Need to cross by an isthmus?]

44. North of East Falkland.

a. Advantages.

- ✓ (1) A landing closer to Stanley would be possible and would exert immediate pressure on the Argentine force.
- ✓ (2) Easier to deploy OPs tactically.
- (3) Coup de main operations less difficult to mount. why?
- (4) Forces and logistic support could be concentrated
- ✓ close to the area of main tactical interest.

b. Disadvantages.

- (1) Unopposed landing unlikely.
- (2) Difficult ground.
- (3) Surprise less likely.
- (4) Argentine quick reaction forces could respond with minimum delay.
- (5) Action could spread to Stanley with risk of heavy casualties.

45. Selection of Landing Location. The choice between a landing in Lafonia and the North of East Falkland is finely balanced. No decision could be made in the absence of detailed intelligence.

46. The landing of a brigade does not in itself achieve the overall political aim. It re-establishes the presence of British Armed Forces on the Falkland Islands and provides the means to effect military pressure on the Argentine forces to withdraw or surrender. But a direct assault on the main Argentine force could not be conducted without the risk of major loss of life among the civilian population. Hence the options of operations subsequent to a landing would be confined to low level attacks on isolated Argentine positions, special force operations, and possibly the destruction of water and electricity supplies, though this could create hardship for the civil population as well as the military. The process of under-mining the Argentine resolve to maintain their presence by these means could be prolonged and morale could be a major factor.

47. A corollary to the constraints on post-landing operations is that additional forces deployed would not necessarily accelerate the achievement of the ultimate objective and would greatly magnify the logistic support and resupply problem. Indeed the helicopter lift required to support a greater force in the field could limit tactical mobility to a marked degree. A decision on the commitment of 5 Infantry Brigade should be deferred, therefore, pending a decision on the timing of the assault and be reviewed in the light of the tactical appreciation at the time.

Conclusion

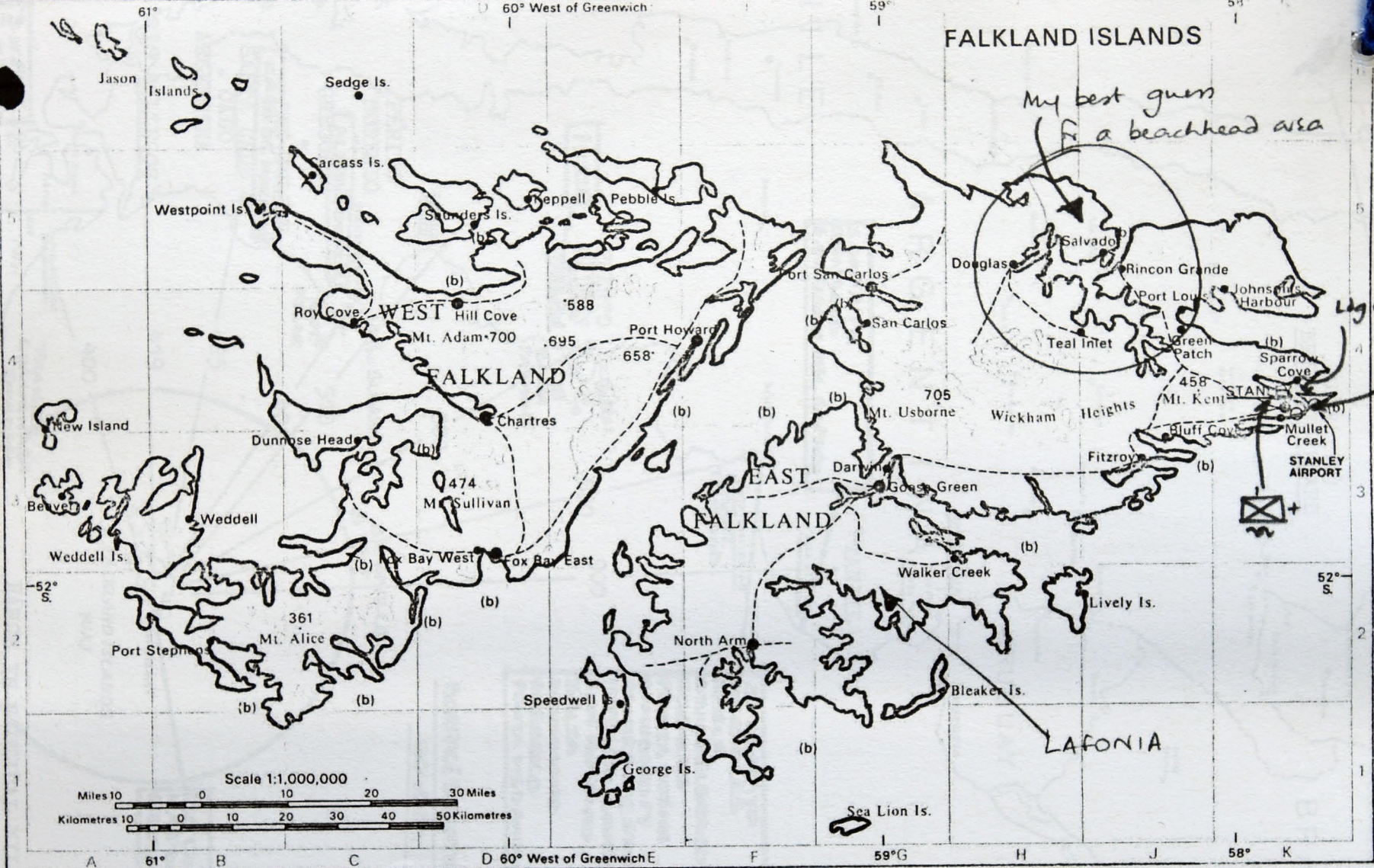
48. There are a number of landing sites, both in West and East Falklands where it should be possible to achieve tactical surprise, make a lightly opposed landing, and attain local superiority. The fundamental choices are to land on West Falkland Island, Lafonia, or the North part of East Island. The former has the least risk, but also the least impact on Argentine forces; the latter would lead to heavier fighting as the main Argentine forces were engaged. All three options are seen to be feasible in principle; and a British presence should be sustainable, albeit with some problems if operations are prolonged.

49. The aim includes the phrase "with a view to repossessing the islands". There may be political possibilities following the re-establishment of a British presence ashore; but military eviction of Argentine forces from Port Stanley itself will be difficult, even if the desire to avoid loss of civilian life and property is waived. The isolated Argentine forces may capitulate, but the outcome of the final phase is uncertain.

50. The assessments in this paper may well be affected by the long interval before landing operations become possible. If the general assessments in this appreciation are accepted, it is recommended that further detailed study of landing sites and ground operations be undertaken, prior to the writing of a plan by the appropriate force Commanders.

FALKLAND ISLANDS

*My best guess
for a beachhead area*

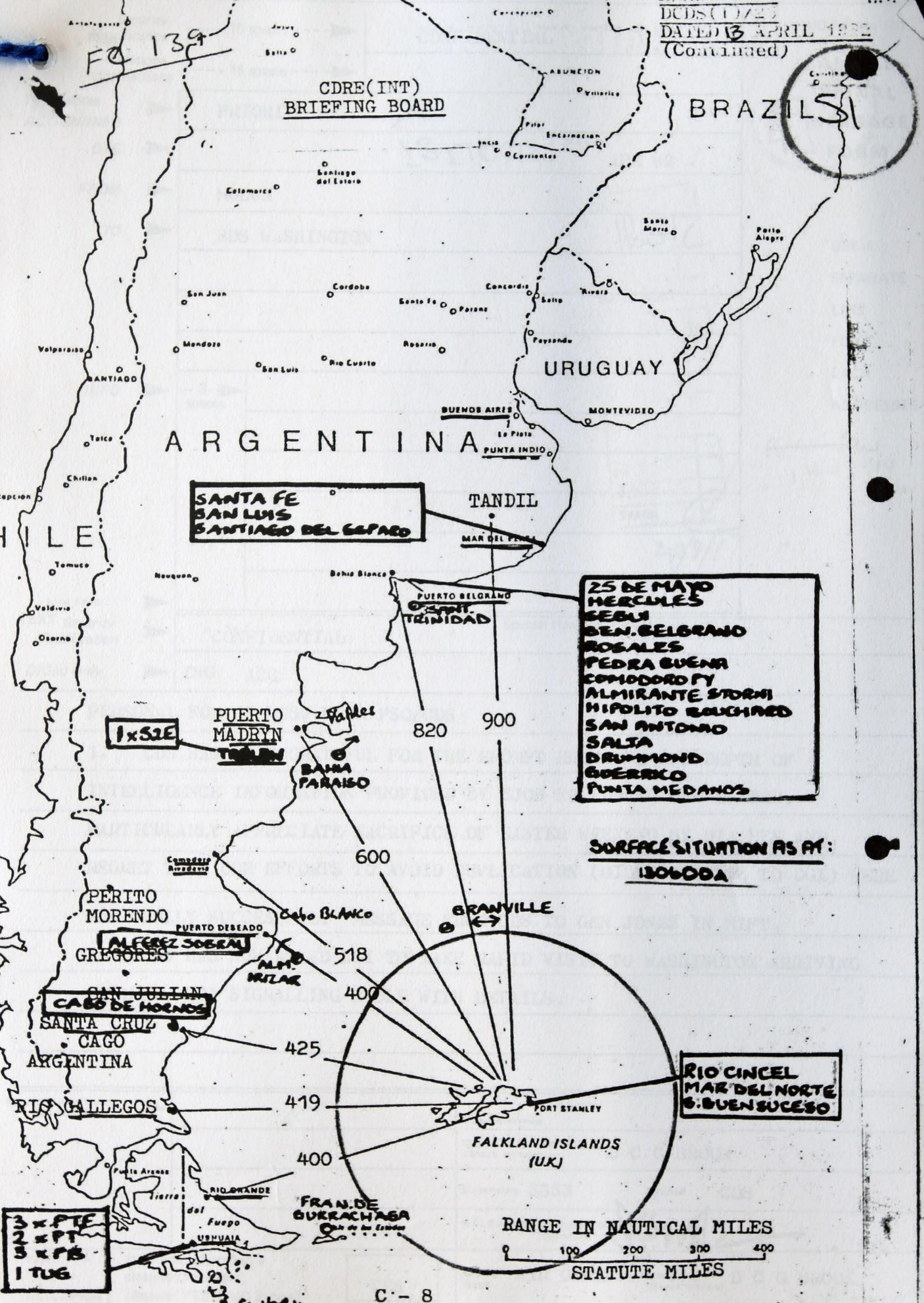


LAFONIA

FC 139

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STATUTE MILES