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HERMES PRESS BRIEFING

1. The Commander of the Task Force proposes to hold a press briefing on-board Hermes on 18 April. By that time the majority of ships with press embarked will have reached Ascension Island.

2. It is proposed that all the press would be gathered together in Hermes, given a short brief on security and the ship and then have a session of about one hour with the Admiral who would address them briefly. This would be followed by a tour of the ship and a time for meeting the ship's Company over a drink. The PR officers on-board will arrange and control the facility.

3. I am sure that this will be a very useful facility in getting across to the journalists on-board the importance we attach to their reporting and explaining - once again - the necessary limitations arising from security. It may also help to diffuse some of the frustration journalists may be feeling in being so close to the Ascension Island without being able to get ashore and find out what is happening.

4. The main impression which it is planned to get over in the briefing is that there will already be a good group of ships near Ascension with enough support and that they will soon be ready to move to the Falkland Area. Hermes will be presented in a determined war-like posture. The briefing will be given with Argentina as a PR target in mind as much as the UK.

5. As I have said I believe such a press briefing aboard HMS Hermes can do nothing but good. The Secretary of State however will wish to take note that it is happening.

13 Apr 82

I S McDonald
PP I S McDonald
DCPR

OFFICE
CHIEF OF NAVAL STAFF
14 APR 1982
FIRST SEA LORD

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