

FC 178

TOP SECRET

D Ops Staff 7/10/2

3 of 13

13

X

1. I am now going to speak about our own Forces and on future Plans under consideration. Starting with the present dispositions of our own Ships which are as at 0600 this morning..... VG 1 ON

2. First, the SSNs. Two are ^{now} in the Exclusion Zone and the third will support South Georgia operations. POINT

3. Second, the South Georgia Group which is to..... VG 2 ON repossess that Island. Its composition of surface ships is shown on the vufoil /PAUSE/ and I shall return to their task later. POINT

4. Third, the Carrier Battle Group. It is as shown on the vufoil FLIP 1

At the moment the group is split; the carriers led by HERMES are on the way to Ascension and due to arrive

X

there late on ⁱⁿ 16 April, where Six destroyers and frigates, ^{are proceeding ahead.} led by GLAMORGAN with ~~Rear Admiral WOODWARD, the Force Commander embarked, are currently being loaded with stores and fuel.~~ POINT

5. Lastly, the Amphibious Landing Group composed as shown, /PAUSE/ is due to reach Ascension on

19 April, where readjustment in loading will take place.

25/4/82

6. Moving now to the Troops embarked in the Amphibious Landing Group. There are 4,600 men from 3 RM Commandos and a Parachute Battalion with Artillery, Rapier Air Defence, Armoured Recce Vehicles, Engineers and Light Helicopter support. 20 Sea Harriers provide offensive air support and there are sufficient helicopters to lift up to 240 troops in the first wave of a landing. There are also 2 helicopter gunships.

air defence

2038/1/1

2038/1/1

7. This vugraph VG 3 ON shows the ships which have been requisitioned or chartered to date. Some have been provided with additional facilities for helicopter operations, replenishment at sea and extra communications equipment VG 3 OFF

8. So far RAF Hercules, VC10's and Civil Belfast aircraft have lifted 450 tons of freight, 13 helicopters and over 1100 men to Ascension.

where are they flying?

9. Maritime Air Surveillance is being carried out by 2 Nimrod aircraft from Ascension. The inner-line cn.. VG 4 ON the Vufoil shows the range to which they can remain on patrol for three hours, and the outer-line the limit for dropping mail and urgently required spares VG 4 OFF

10. That covers the whereabouts of our own forces.

I will now discuss 4 separate Operations:

a. The enforcement of the 200 mile Exclusion Zone around the FI before the Carrier Battle Group arrives.

b. The repossession of South Georgia.

c. The establishment of sea control and local air superiority of the EZ after the Carrier Battle Group arrives and finally,

d. The repossession of the Falkland Islands.

unless a Vufoil

11. The two SSNs in the EZ have been instructed..... VG 5 ON to attack all Argentine warships, naval auxiliaries (and submarines) within the 200 mile zone. (All SSNs are armed with MK 8 torpedoes — *surface* and the longer range TIGERFISH guided torpedoes.) *are they?*

12. Communications to and from the SSNs are carried out at regular preplanned intervals. These intervals can be varied but the shorter the interval the greater

are the tactical restrictions placed upon the Submarine Commander who has to come to periscope depth to receive signals VG 5 OFF

13. Turning next to South Georgia which we plan to repossess VG 6 & 7 ON

as soon as possible. The Task Group on the vufoil has already been formed with an embarked force of about 150 Royal Marines. ^{+705AS} One SSN will be assigned in support with the task of anti-ship patrol in the vicinity of South Georgia. The Group will reach the area of the island about the 21st April and weather permitting, it is planned to conduct covert reconnaissance using Special Boat Service and Special Air Service men. When sufficient intelligence has been obtained, Leith and Grytviken will be taken by landing Royal Marines in helicopters supported if necessary by naval gunfire. The BAS people on the island are well away from Leith and Grvtviken.

14. The environment in South Georgia is generally harsh. The temperature is normally around freezing at this time of year. Fog is commonplace and gales frequent. Although icebergs are present there is little danger of the sea freezing over VG 6 & 7 OFF

15. Returning to the Falkland Islands..... VG 8 ON

It is not until the Battle Group, with its ships and aircraft, arrives in late April that we can dominate the Exclusion Zone. — elaborate.

16. Sea and air control of the area and detailed tactical intelligence are an essential prerequisite before the next stage in our operations can proceed. This is to ^{put a line across the way to} land and repossess the Falkland Islands in early May, with minimum civilian casualties and damage

to property.

17. The main factors to be considered when planning this landing are as follows:

a. Weather in the Falkland Islands is always unpredictable though less severe than in South Georgia. With the onset of winter in mid-May it is wet, chilly and windy. Gales are frequent. It is normally very cloudy with low visibility and seas are usually rough. This can have a significant affect on operations in terms of troop exposure, air support, helicopter operations and amphibious landing over exposed beaches.

b. General Glover has spoken about the terrain and I would only emphasise that there are no roads outside Port Stanley so tactical mobility will depend chiefly on the use of helicopters.

c. Assessing relative air and sea strengths, the UK Task Group should be able to operate with ^{a lower} relative

^{and threat} immunity in the eastern sector of the exclusion

^{mission will depend on the scale of} zone provided Stanley airfield, ^{and the point at which aircraft comes} is not improved.

~~If it is, the offensive air operations which the~~

~~Argentines could mount would be very modest.~~

^{Task Force would be at maximum, role is} Towards the western end of the zone, where

^{the western boundaries of E2 will be approached} Argentine offensive aircraft from the mainland

can reach, air attack is progressively more

likely.

d. The Argentine land forces deployed on the Falklands are numerically superior to those embarked in the UK Task Force. However, they are at present hamstrung by lack of movement resources, and cannot comprehensively cover the extensive coastline. For political and military reasons, they are likely to be concentrated in the Stanley area and at 2 or 3 of the larger outlying settlements. This concentration, coupled with the need to keep civilian casualties and damage to the minimum, precludes a direct assault on Stanley. ^{with} Given local air and sea superiority and tactical surprise, a landing force could establish itself in the North part of the East Island. It would need to be away from the Argentine force concentrations and out of artillery range from Stanley. This will impose a direct pressure on the Argentine main force.

e. An alternative would be to land on West Island, or in the Southern part of East Island. Surprise landings should be possible and local superiority assured - although in the West the air threat from the Argentine ^{mainland} is greater. The next stage would be to extend our operations in South-East and West Falkland

f. The defeat of the main Argentine force around Stanley is liable to be difficult and protracted due to their superior numbers and the proximity of civilians. However, with the island totally cut off from the main land and with a swift series of coup de main operations on the ground it should force the Argentine troops to capitulate.

19. The ultimate choice of a landing site will depend on geographical and current tactical intelligence. We must know more about the beaches, mining and strengths and deployment of Argentine forces. The gaining of current intelligence is thus a key factor.

VG 8
OFF

20. This leads to a word about the use of Special Forces. One SAS squadron and ³ ~~an~~ ^{detachments} SBS Units are embarked and ^{one} ~~two~~ SAS squadrons and one SBS section are available to deploy from UK at short notice. Priorities for employment are firstly to gather and report intelligence from the Falkland Islands and secondly for offensive operations.

CLOSED FOR 40 YEARS UNDER
FOI SECTION 27

22. Now finally a word on logistics. I will not disguise the difficulties which the very considerable distances impose. The length of our supply lines has made it necessary to establish a Joint Service Support Unit on Ascension. This is already fully operational. We are making considerable use of Wideawake airfield and local communication and support facilities.

23. The force can be resupplied either by air to Ascension and then onward by sea followed by an emergency air drop, if within range, or by sea direct to the operational area.

24. In terms of fuel, food and stores, the Task Force is self-sufficient in the South Atlantic until the last half of May. These estimates, if course, could be reduced in the event of casualties and plans are being drawn up for the resupply of the force to sustain it for at least a six month period. This will certainly necessitate taking up further ships from trade.

25. In short, there are logistic difficulties but they will be surmounted.

27. Your Chiefs of Staff will be pleased to answer any of your questions.

14 April 1982.

FC 177
~~FC 175~~

12

D Ops Staff 7/10/2

1. I am now going to speak about our own Forces and on future Plans under consideration. Starting with the present dispositions of our own Ships which are shown as at 0600 this morning

VG 1 ON

2. First, the SSNs or Hunter/Killer Submarines. Two are now in the Exclusion Zone and the third will support South Georgia operations.

POINT

3. Second, the South Georgia Group which is to repossess that Island. Its composition of surface ships is shown on the vufoil [PAUSE] and I shall return to their task later.

VG 2 ON

POINT

4. Third, the Carrier Battle Group. It is as shown on the vufoil

FLIP 1

At the moment the group is split; the carriers led by HERMES are on the way to Ascension and due to arrive there late tomorrow Friday. Five destroyers and frigates, with a supporting tanker are proceeding on ahead.

POINT

POINT

5. Lastly, the Amphibious Landing Group composed as shown, [PAUSE] is due to reach Ascension on Monday 19 April, where readjustment in loading will take place.

POINT
FLIP 2
VG 2

DATE: 25/4/82

6. Moving now to the Troops embarked in the Amphibious Landing Group. There are 4,600 men from 3 RM Commandos and a Parachute Battalion with Artillery, Rapier Air Defence, Armoured Recce Vehicles, Engineers and Light Helicopter support.

20 Sea Harriers provide offensive air support and AD. There are also sufficient helicopters to lift up to 240 troops in the first wave of a landing. There are also 2 helicopter gunships.

VG 1 &

2 OFF

REF: 2038/1/1

2038/1/1

7. This vugraph VG 3 ON
shows the ships which have to date been taken up from trade
PAUSE. Some have been provided with additional facilities
for helicopter operations, replenishment at sea and extra
communications equipment VG 3 OF

8. So far RAF Hercules and VC10's, and Civil Belfast
aircraft have lifted nearly 500 tons of freight, 13 helicopters
and about ~~200~~¹¹⁰⁰ men to, and for onward movement from, Ascension.

9. Maritime Air Surveillance is being carried out by 2
Nimrod aircraft from Ascension. The inner-line on VG 4 ON
the Vufoil shows the range to which they can remain on
patrol for three hours, and the outer-line the limit for
dropping mail and urgently required spares VG 4 OF

10. That covers the whereabouts of our own forces. I will
now discuss Military Options: VG4A ON

11. The first which you have already approved is the
enforcement of the 200 mile Exclusion Zone. The two SSNs
have been instructed VG 5 ON
to attack all Argentine warships which includes submarines,
and naval auxiliaries within the Zone.

12. Communications to and from the SSNs are carried out at
regular preplanned intervals. These intervals can be varied
but the shorter the interval the greater are the tactical
restrictions placed upon the Submarine Commander who has to
come to periscope depth to receive signals VG 5 OF

13. Second the repossession of, as soon as possible, South

Georgia VG 6 ON

The Task Group on the vufoil has already been formed with an VG4A OFI

embarked force of over ¹⁵⁰~~200~~ Royal Marines ⁷⁰ and SAS. One SSN

will be assigned in support with the task of anti-ship patrol in the vicinity of South Georgia. The Group will reach the

area of the island about next Wednesday, the 21 April, and - weather permitting - it is planned to conduct covert

reconnaissance using Special Boat Service and Special Air

Service men. When sufficient tactical intelligence has VG 6 OFI

been obtained, Leith and Grytviken will be taken by landing VG 7 ON

Royal Marines in helicopters supported if necessary by

naval gunfire. The BAS people on the island are well away SLIDE OI

from both settlements.

14. The environment in South Georgia is generally harsh.

The temperature is normally around freezing at this time of

year. Fog is commonplace and gales frequent. Although

icebergs are present there is little danger of the sea

freezing over VG 7 &

15. Third - the establishment of sea control and air SLIDE OI

superiority of the Exclusion Zone after VG4A ON

the Carrier Battle Group arrives on about 28 April. VG 5 ON

At this stage we shall have the capability to stop and turn back merchant ships, to intercept Argentine Air Transport Aircraft, and thereby prevent them from flying in further reinforcements or supplies to sustain their forces, to use

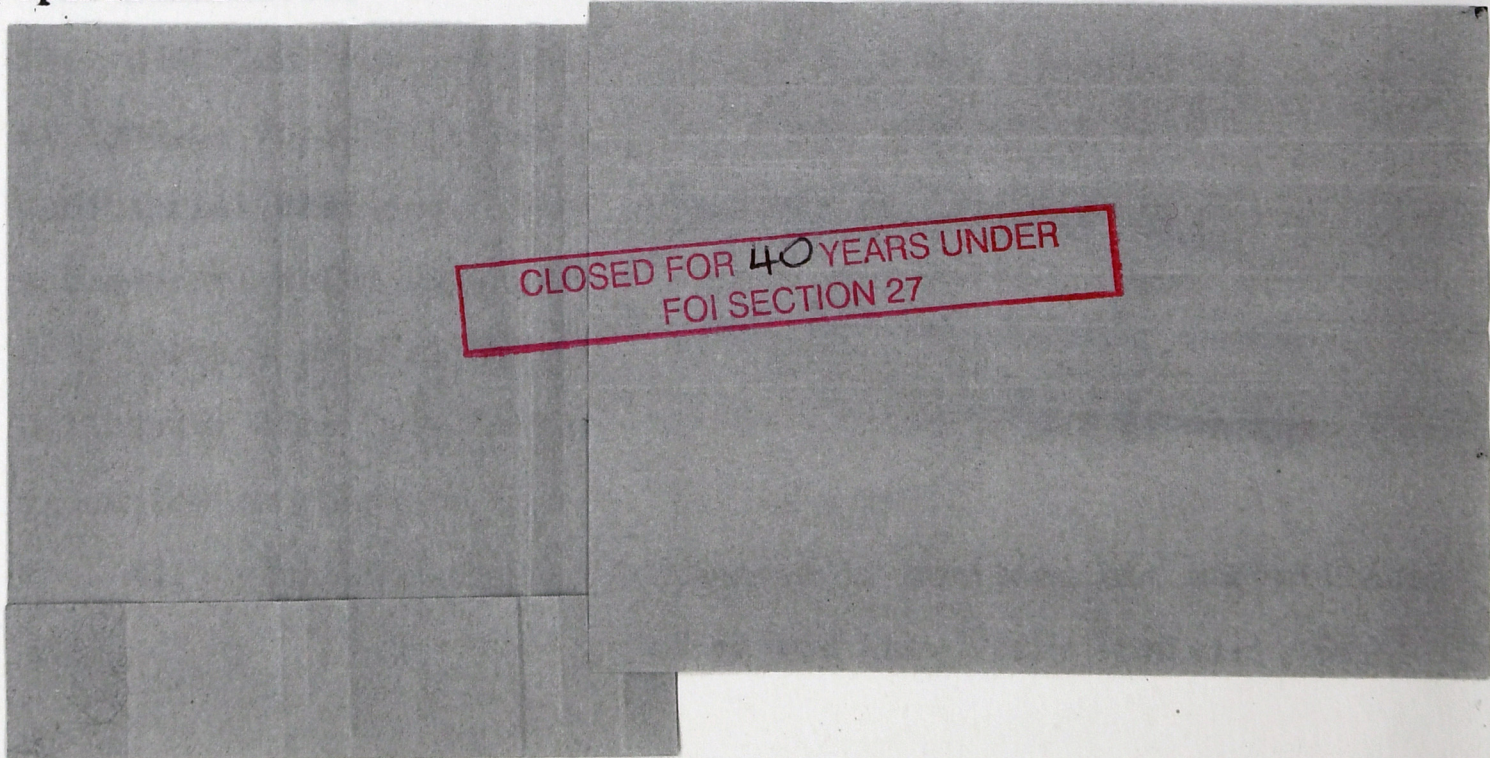
Harriers for offensive air operations and ships' surface to air missile systems. In short, we shall be able to dominate the area

VG 5 OF

16. Fourth - the repossession of the Falkland Islands. The aim here is to put a force ashore with a view to repossession with minimum civilian casualties and minimum damage to property. The Amphibious Landing Group could arrive about 7 May and a Military Appreciation is being prepared, after which the Force Commander will be directed to provide a plan. At this stage, Prime Minister, I would prefer not to ^{elaborate.} ~~go any further.~~ The key factor ^{of course} is the gaining of intelligence, ^{and this} ~~which~~ leads to ~~a word about~~ the use of Special Forces.

VG4A OF

17. One SAS squadron and 3 Special Boat Section Detachments are embarked ^(all the SAS + 1 SBS are in SG) and one SAS squadron and one Special Boat Section ^{After SG,} are available to deploy from UK at short notice. Priorities for employment ^{will be} ~~are~~ firstly to gather and report intelligence from the Falkland Islands and secondly for offensive operations.



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~~21. The force can be resupplied by air to Ascension and then onward by sea and by sea direct to the operational area.~~

²¹
22. In terms of fuel, food and stores, the Task Force is self-sufficient in the South Atlantic until the last half of May. These estimates, of course, would be reduced in the event of casualties and plans are being drawn up for the resupply of the force to sustain it for at least a six month period. This will certainly necessitate taking up further ships from trade.

²²
23. In short, there are logistic difficulties but they will be surmounted.

14 April 1982

Stop force → push on
para 6ⁿ — is only in role
Bn available.