

SECRET



MF
|
2

MO 5/21

Copy to:
PSO/CDS
Sec/CNS
PS/PUS

- PS/CAS

OPERATION PARAQUET - RECONNAISSANCE BY VICTOR TANKER

I have shown the Secretary of State your minute of 16th April. S of S has re-emphasised to me his concern that the operation should only be mounted if the Force Commander himself has come to the conclusion that there is no other way of obtaining the intelligence which is essential for the success of his operation.

2. S of S assumes that in the event of diversion to Brazil it will be possible for the aircraft to jettison sensitive equipment, photographs etc into the sea before landing.

17th April 1982

(D B OMAND)
PS/S of S

SECRET

SECRET

Reference.....CAS.90879

17

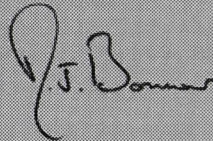
S)21

PS/Secretary of State

Copy to: PSO/CDS
Sec/CNS
PS/PUS

OPERATION PARAQUET - RECONNAISSANCE BY VICTOR TANKER

Thank you for your minute of 16th April. The Command arrangements established for Op Corporate already ensure that the points made in your first paragraph are fully met and the Air Commander for Op Corporate, under whose direction the operation will be mounted, will of course keep closely in touch with the Force Commander over the next few days. In the meantime aircraft will be moved to Ascension over the weekend so that the option is kept open. Action is also in hand to inform the FCO of our plans.



(D.J. BONNER)
PS/CAS

16th April 1982

SECRET



Copy to:

 PSO/CDS
 Sec/CNS
 PS/PUS

 MF
 16

MO 5/21

PS/CAS

OPERATION PARAQUET
RECONNAISSANCE BY VICTOR TANKER

The Secretary of State has studied CAS's minute of 16th April. The Secretary of State agrees that the option of a photographic reconnaissance should be kept open, and he is content for planning for the operation to be set in hand, keeping the FCO informed. The decision to mount the operation should, he believes, be taken only on the specific recommendation of the Force Commander given the evident dangers to Operation Paraquet through the possibility of losing the element of surprise, and in the light of his assessment at the time of the availability and quality of other imagery.

2. If the Force Commander asks for the sortie to be mounted the Secretary of State suggests that once the Victor is airborne the FCO warns HM Ambassador, Brasilia of the possibility of a diversion so that he can be ready to respond quickly should the final stages of refuelling fail.

16th April 1982

 (D B OMAND)
 PS/S of S

7/51-

SECRET

Reference CAS. 90875 25-1 5/1

Secretary of State

Copy to: CDS
CNS
CGS
PUS-

5/29

Handwritten notes:
2. Shall necessary light of 7 SAFFLITE
3. Will flight destroy nuclear
All the...
11-4-82

OPERATION PARAQUET - RECONNAISSANCE BY VICTOR TANKER

CINC Fleet considers that his plans for Operation Paraquet would be considerably strengthened if airborne visual and photographic reconnaissance could be provided off South Georgia immediately prior to the arrival of TG 317.9. The aim would be to establish the location of Argentinian ground forces on the island and to reveal whether shipping is concealed in inlets and coastal waters.

2. An airborne reconnaissance operation could be mounted from Ascension Island using a Victor Tanker in the reconnaissance role; an additional five Victor Tankers would provide airborne refuelling support. The sortie profile would allow for one hour of low level visual and photographic reconnaissance in the areas of interest. An outline of the route is at Annex A. The results of the visual reconnaissance could be communicated direct to the task force, and subsequent analysis would be signalled from Ascension Island.

3. To meet the timescale of the operation, it would be necessary to deploy a force of 9 Victors (6 + 3 reserves) to Ascension Island on Sunday 18 Apr 82 to fly the sortie from 20 Apr 82 onwards. The aircraft would be operating outside the range of Argentinian Air Defence Units, and there is no intelligence that the Argentinians on South Georgia possess an effective anti-aircraft capability. With one exception, each of the refuelling brackets would allow for the Victors to return to Ascension Island if fuel transfer was not achieved. The exception is the last refuelling rendezvous over 400 miles off Rio de Janeiro. If the reconnaissance Victor failed to take on fuel there, the crew would have to divert to Brazil. (It would do so on the pretext that it had become unserviceable during a training flight from Ascension). Although that eventuality is unlikely, you will wish to be aware of this element of potential political embarrassment implicit in the plan.

4. In view of the political implication of an emergency diversion to Brazil I should be grateful for your approval to proceed with this operation in support of CINC Fleet's plans.

16th April 1982

CAS

Annex:

A. Map showing proposed sortie route

SECRET