



SECRETARY OF STATEOPERATION CORPORATE - LANDING OPERATIONS

1. The Chiefs of Staff have been studying the timing of landing operations on the Falklands, and the scope for delaying them.

Our preliminary views are that:

a. The Carrier Force can start a sea/air blockade from 29 April. It should be possible to sustain it until August; but intensity of operations, serviceability problems, and fatigue could cause a progressive deterioration in effectiveness from the beginning of June. Attrition due to enemy action could also impair the effectiveness of the blockade.

b. The earliest the Amphibious force would be in a position to land is 7 May. Peak force availability will be achieved on 16 May (when 2 Para Bn will be integrated with the force). From the end of May a landing could be subject to increasing operational risk, the exact extent of which could be better assessed as the date nears. However, if an effective blockade is imposed, then the capability of the Argentinian forces might decline to an even greater extent. Choice of date must in any event take account of the 14 day passage time from Ascension to the Falkland Islands.

c. If negotiating positions or operational considerations point to a landing beyond the middle of May, we would need to hold many of the troops on Ascension in tents or consider using South Georgia as a forward base. Early arrangements for tentage, water and other supplies at Ascension would be needed.

2. I suggest we consider the full implications tomorrow, after we have had a chance to examine CinC Fleet's outline landing plan (expected today).

19 April 1982

CDS