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OPERATION 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 may be possible to sustain it until August; but attrition, due to enemy action and intensity of operations, serviceability problems, and fatigue are likely to cause a progressive deterioration in effectiveness from the beginning of June.

b. The Commander-in-Chief reports that the earliest the Amphibious force would be in a position to land is 14 May, and that the "landing window" extends until 23 May, with an optimum date of 16 May (when Intrepid and 2 Para Bn will be integrated with the force). From the end of May a landing would be subject to increasing operational risk, the exact extent of which could be better assessed as the date nears. Given a 14 day passage time this produces a latest prudent decision date to launch the force from Ascension of 9 May.

c. If nonetheless negotiating positions force us to postpone a landing to the end of May or perhaps June, we would need to hold many of the troops on Ascension in tents. Early arrangements for tentage and water supplies 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).

19th April 1982

CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE STAFF