



Secretary of State for Defence

Attached are some notes which you could draw on if asked for a sitrep at cabinet. How far you want to go is clearly for your judgement but the bits in [ ] brackets are the most sensitive and should not be revealed.

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20/4



CABINET1. ARGENTINE FORCES

Navy - now left port. Organised into two naval task groups:

TG 79.1 '25 de Mayo', three A69 Frigates and the Type 42 destroyer 'Santissima Trinidad' (ordered to return to Puerto Belgrano late on 17th April with Sea Dart launcher defect). [believed to be 250 miles S. of Puerto Belgrano.]

TG 79.2 one Gearing Destroyer, three Sumner Destroyers, a Type 42 destroyer, the Hercules Tanker 'Punta Medanos' and possibly Cruiser 'General Belgrano'. [believed to be operating off Puerto Belgrano.]

Also an unidentified Auxiliary operating off Cape Pembroke (East Falkland), we believe laying buoys.

With the exception of the Auxiliary no Argentine naval vessel or submarine is believed to be inside the MEZ. During the course of last night a merchantman (believed to be Argentine), spotted inside the MEZ; its destination not clear but possibly S. Georgia.

Land

Elements of 10 Brigade believed to be moving to the Falklands to replace or/reinforce 9 Brigade. It is believed that approximately 7,000 troops are on islands.

Air

High level of air resupply has continued, but there are no major new developments. Port Stanley runway has not been lengthened, but the dispersal area is being extended.



2. OWN FORCESNavy

As at 0600Z on Tuesday 20th April principal operational dispositions were:

TG 317.8 (BATTLE GROUP). Sailed from Ascension on 18th April and is now 800 miles SW of there.

TG 317.0 (AMPHIBIOUS GROUP). At Ascension, where it will be joined by CANBERRA and ELK today.

TG 317.9 (ANTRIM GROUP). Now some 300 miles North of South Georgia. [Has been authorised to proceed into Argentine Defence Zone 200 NM round South Georgia.]

Support Ships. UGANDA left Gibraltar 19th April. HECLA sails from there today. FORT AUSTIN returns to Ascension today. Having embarked further stores, she will sail to join the BATTLE GROUP. A total of 35 ships have either been requisitioned or chartered. Recent additions are:

Norland (P&O). Troop transport for 2nd Para Bn. Due to sail Hull tomorrow.

Europic Ferry (Townsend Thoreson). Troop transport ship. Currently at Southampton; due to depart on the 22nd.

Anco Charger (OTT and P&O) Tanker, jointly owned. At Portsmouth for fitting out and loading.

Army

One troop of Blowpipe moves this evening to reinforce Gibraltar (to arrive after dark). 2 Para Group will embark on MV Norland at Hull tomorrow. Europic Ferry starts loading equipment at Southampton today.



Air

Three Nimrod Mk 2 MPA aircraft remain at Ascension for surface/sub-surface surveillance sorties. A further Nimrod aircraft is being held at Lajes as additional back-up.

Four Victor K2 aircraft deployed successfully to Ascension Island on 19th April bringing to 9 the total number of K2s at Wide Awake airfield. Positioning of support equipment has been completed. The remaining 12 Victors at Marham may be used to support Vulcan and Harrier deployment.

Vulcan weapon training (three aircraft) will commence at Garvie Island today (20th April). Live 1000 lb bombs will be dropped. Ten aircraft have been fitted for air/air refuelling.

Preparations continue for possible Harrier GR3 deployments to Ascension Island, via Dakar, during the period 26th-28th April.