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 DUS(P)  
 Head of DS11  
 CPO

MO 5/21

21 APR 1982  
 MINISTER OF DEFENCE

DCPRPR FACILITIES FOR OPERATION PARAQUET

The Secretary of State was grateful for your minute of 19th April, and he discussed it briefly with you this afternoon. The Secretary of State agrees with the broad conclusions which you set out in your minute for the handling of PR for Operation Paraquet. The Secretary of State does not believe we should go out of our way to try to up the PR stakes for this Operation: it will generate its own interest. If timing permits the Secretary of State believes we should consider trying to arrange a very early statement in Parliament (which need not be at 3.30pm provided that the House is sitting). Otherwise we must be ready with a short factual announcement of the Operation immediately it is possible to make it. The Secretary of State believes that this should be flat in tone and factual in content.

2. The Secretary of State agrees that we should respond thereafter to pressure to have a press conference, and that you should hold this with support from experts (say at 1-Star level) but not elevated further. The Secretary of State would not favour separate media interviews by these experts, although much would depend upon the circumstances at the time.

3. The Secretary of State agrees that material should be worked up urgently to reduce the time needed to react to news of the Operation becoming public. He believes we should be ready with the main lines of the low-key statement, having established in advance such questions as whether the presence of the SAS and SBS are admitted. He also believes we should be ready with a very strong statement on the UK sovereignty of these particular islands where our claim is indisputable. The Secretary of State would be grateful if the Head of DS11 could co-ordinate the preparation of this material.

20th April 1982

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