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pa (221)
JW 21/5

~~Mr Wright~~

Thank you.

JW 21/5

cc Private Secretary
PS/PUS
Mr Weston

1. At the Chiefs of Staff meeting this morning we were given an account of the progress of our landing forces. The main points were as follows:-

- (a) Weather conditions overnight have been ideal, with good cloud cover.
- (b) Seven major vessels plus landing craft have entered the Falklands Sound. Landings have been made to the east and west of San Carlos Water. Another landing had been made to the north in the area of Port San Carlos.
- (c) At least one Argentine position had been overrun and prisoners taken.
- (d) Surprise appears to have been complete. A large number of diversionary actions had taken place and were continuing.
- (e) The MOD will be making a statement at 12 noon today (copy attached). This will maintain the line that a number of raids are going on and will be continued. The hope is that we can thereby disguise from the Argentines for as long as possible the fact that a major landing has been carried out. The CGS thought that the MOD would probably have to come clean at the latest by tomorrow. In this case Mr Nott himself would make a statement. The CGS was hopeful that we might be able to disguise the fact of the landing for a further 24 hours, by which time the bridgehead would be fully established and our forces would have had time to fan out. Mr Fenn is aware of the line we are taking for the time being. The CGS was particularly appreciative of the line taken this morning on the 'Today' programme by the Secretary of State. He thought this exactly right and that it would help considerably in disguising our intentions from the Argentines.

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- (f) The nearest Argentine ships are off the tip of Tierra del Fuego (2 old Sumner-class frigates). They are a minimum of 12 to 15 hours' steaming from the Islands. The remainder of the Argentine fleet is much further north near the Bahia Blanca area or in Puerto Belgrano.
- (g) The weather forecast is favourable. Continuing low cloud will make Argentine air operations difficult against our disembarked forces.
- (h) As you will see from the attached MOD press announcement, the fact of yesterday's helicopter crash with the loss of 21 men is now being made public.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'D H Gillmore', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

D H Gillmore

21 May 1982

any change in mission - will advise

PRESS STATEMENT - 12 NOON 21 MAY

The Task Force has landed a number of raiding parties on the Falkland Islands during the night. These raids are still in progress. Early indications are that they are achieving their objectives. Bombardment from ships in the Task Force continued in the vicinity of Port Stanley and other areas in East Falklands. Harriers from the Task Force have mounted attacks in the Fox Bay area. All these activities have been directed against Argentine military targets including fuel and ammunition dumps and military stores.

Sadly in the course of a transfer of personnel between ships in advance of these operations a Royal Navy helicopter with 30 men on board met with an accident and ditched. Nine of those on board were rescued. One dead body was recovered. Twenty are missing, presumed dead. The next of kin have been informed.