

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE  
 CHIEFS OF STAFF COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a Meeting held in Room 5301, Ministry  
 of Defence, Main Building, Whitehall,  
 on WEDNESDAY 21 April 1982 at 10.00 am

PRESENT

Air Chief Marshal Sir Michael Beetham,  
 Representing the Chief of the Defence Staff

Admiral Sir Henry Leach,  
 Chief of the Naval Staff

Lieutenant General Sir Thomas Morony,  
 Representing the  
 Chief of the General Staff

Air Marshal Sir David Craig,  
 Representing the Chief of the Air Staff

ALSO PRESENT

Air Chief Marshal Sir David Evans,  
 Vice Chief of the Defence Staff  
 (Personnel and Logistics)

Lieutenant General Sir James Glover,  
 Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff  
 (Intelligence)

Air Commodore R G Heaslip,  
 Representing the  
 Assistant Chief of the Defence  
 Staff (Policy)

Rear-Admiral D W Brown,  
 Assistant Chief of the Defence  
 Staff (Operations)

Air Vice-Marshal T B Stephenson,  
 Assistant Chief of the Defence  
 Staff (Signals)

Colonel M M S Finnis,  
 Representing the  
 Assistant Chief of the Defence Staff  
 (Personnel and Logistics)

Brigadier R E L Jenkins,  
 Director Defence Operational  
 Movements Staff

Sir Frank Cooper,  
 Permanent Under Secretary

Mr I S McDonald,  
 Deputy Chief of Public Relations

Mr J M Stewart,  
 Assistant Under Secretary  
 (Defence Staff)

Mr D H Gillmore,  
 Foreign and Commonwealth Office

SECRETARIAT

Captain J E S Raymond RN  
 Lieutenant Colonel J B R Peacock  
 Lieutenant Colonel W S Bale

C O N T E N T S

PART I - ITEMS DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING

- 1-5. (1) OPERATION CORPORATE
- 6. (2) OPERATION CORPORATE

PART II - ITEMS DEALT WITH PRIOR TO THE MEETING

Nil

Note:

- 1. Recorded as a Confidential Annex.
- 2. Recorded as a Confidential Annex (Restricted Distribution).

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE  
CHIEFS OF STAFF COMMITTEECONFIDENTIAL ANNEX  
TO  
COS 26TH MEETING/82 HELD ON  
WEDNESDAY 21 APRIL 1982 AT 10.00 amOPERATION CORPORATEITEM 1. INTELLIGENCE MATTERS

1. SIR MICHAEL BEETHAM (Representing the Chief of the Defence Staff) invited the Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff (Intelligence) to update them on current intelligence.

2. LIEUTENANT GENERAL GLOVER (Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff (Intelligence)) reviewed the intelligence outlined in the latest signalled summary (1), and summarised a report (2) on the Soviet attitude to the Falkland crisis. He said he would discuss with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office a report that certain West German firms had offered to sell the Argentines torpedoes and machinery for ammunition loading, and he would issue that morning an assessment on the Argentine military and civilian presence in the South Sandwich Islands.

3. In discussion it was agreed that the Deputy Chief of Public Relations should discuss with the Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff (Intelligence) how best to release to the Press our own intelligence disproving Argentine's propaganda claims that a merchant ship had successfully passed through the Exclusion Zone to reach the Falkland Islands.

Note by the Secretary

The Assessment on the South Sandwich Islands had been issued (3).

## Notes:

1. INTSUM No. 34 210600Z April 1982.
2. Secret Report dated 201440Z April 1982.
3. DCDS(I) 26 dated 21 April 1982.

ITEM 2. OWN FORCES

4. The situation was set out in the Force Tote Sitrep (4). In discussion it was noted that the Navy Department were seeking assurances from Brazil that she had no submarines operating in the area through which the HERMES group would pass. It was also agreed that no publicity would be given to the VICTOR reconnaissance flight of 20 April.

ITEM 3. PUBLIC RELATIONS

5. MR McDONALD (Deputy Chief of Public Relations) reviewed the major articles in the daily newspapers. In discussion it was agreed that:

a. There was no reason to conceal from the media that the Task Force had the capability to use Stingray or that the RAF Harriers were being modified to enable them to use Sidewinder.

b. "Local boy" stories could be used provided policy issues were not discussed.

ITEM 4. SECURITY

6. The Committee agreed that there was a continuing requirement to remind staff to maintain the strictest security both in conversation and on paper. The circulation of sensitive papers needed to be severely restricted and, where possible, the use of specific dates should be avoided.

ITEM 5. ACTION AND DECISIONS REQUIRED

7. The Committee noted the summary of action in hand (5); a revised summary is at Annex A. After a short discussion the following points were agreed:

a. The Operation CORPORATE - Prisoner of War paper (6) would be cleared out of Committee that afternoon.

## Notes:

4. Force Tote Sitrep (Issue 27).
5. Annex A to COS 25th Meeting/82.
6. Attachment to COS 1053/742/1 dated 20 April.

- b. The BAS ship BRANSFIELD was the most suitable ship to take Argentine PWs off South Georgia. It would have to be requisitioned as a last resort if the Foreign and Commonwealth Office were unable to come to an agreement with the BAS.
8. In discussion the following points were made:
- a. The section of the Flow Chart (7) on the Carrier Battle Group was incorrect. There was no requirement either to decide the Mission or to issue a Directive. In addition the Amphibious Group line needed to be adjusted to show both the earliest and latest dates for the group to leave Ascension Island. There was a need to include Special Force operations; deployment of VULCANS; offensive air action against the airfield at Port Stanley; and the setting up of the Air Exclusion Zone. There was no longer a need to show the PARAQUET Group.
- b. The Navy Department would circulate a paper on the Rules of Engagement for the Carrier Battle Group within the Maritime Exclusion Zone later that day.
- c. The Assistant Chief of the Defence Staff (Personnel and Logistics) had circulated a paper (8) on tentage and water in Ascension Island.
9. Summing up SIR MICHAEL BEETHAM said they would wish to instruct the Assistant Chief of the Defence Staff (Operations) to amend the Flow Chart in accordance with their wishes.

## Annex:

A. Operation CORPORATE - Action in Hand.

## Notes:

7. D Ops 7/10/2 dated 19 April 1982.  
8. VCDS(P&L)/127/3/3 dated 20 April 1982.

OPERATION CORPORATE - ACTIONS IN HAND

ITEM	ARISING FROM COS MEETING	DECISION OR ACTION REQUIRED	SPONSOR	ACTION/ DECISION BY	CONTINUED	CURRENT STATE
0023	6/82 Item 1	Op CORPORATE - Military Appreciation	COS	DS 11	7/82 Item 5 12/82 Item 6	To be revised -
0059	23/82 Item 6	Prisoners of War	ACDS(P&L)	ACDS(P&L)		For clearance O/C by 21 Apr
0061	23/82 Item 7	Battle Casualty Replacements	ACDS(P&L)	ACDS(P&L)		
0064	25/82 Item 5	Assessment of Vulcan Capability	AFD	AFD		For COS 23 Apr 82

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE  
CHIEFS OF STAFF COMMITTEECONFIDENTIAL ANNEX  
TO  
COS 26TH MEETING/82 HELD ON  
WEDNESDAY 21 APRIL 1982 AT 10.00 amOPERATION CORPORATEITEM 6. TIMETABLE FOR MILITARY OPTIONS

1. The Committee had before them a diagram (1) setting out the timetable of military options in enforcing a sea/air Exclusion Zone and implementing Operation SUTTON.

2. SIR HENRY LEACH said it was important to be clear on the earliest date on which Operation SUTTON could be mounted under various circumstances. The earliest landing date could be met only by the Amphibious Group as presently constituted. If they considered it necessary that 2 PARA Group should be integrated into the Amphibious Force before an assault landing was made, the earliest landing could not take place more than 3 days before the optimum date. They should also take a view on the importance of HMS INTREPID, the EDATS Trawlers and the ATLANTIC CONVEYOR to the initial landing operation, since they could not arrive until after the optimum landing date. He considered that 2 PARA Group was vital but the remainder were not. He therefore considered that the Amphibious Group should remain at Ascension Island until 2 PARA Group was integrated with it. It would be easy to regroup the embarked units and their equipment at Ascension Island; it could become progressively more difficult to do so the further south the force moved, particularly in bad weather.

3. SIR THOMAS MORONY (Representing the Chief of the General Staff) said that an assault landing would require the maximum force including the 2 PARA Group, and that if it was intended to conduct such an operation the force should be held at Ascension Island to regroup, although he doubted whether the force was large enough both to make an assault landing and subsequently to exploit it against determined opposition. However he thought this option was becoming less likely, and that

## Note:

1. COS(Misc) 142/742/1 dated 20 April 1982.

Ministers might prefer to adopt other operations together with diplomacy to achieve their aim. In that case there could be advantage in the earliest possible departure from Ascension Island. It was essential that they received political direction on this fundamental question.

4. SIR DAVID CRAIG (Representing the Chief of the Air Staff) said that thought should be given to the public interpretation of any delay at Ascension Island. It might be seen as a lack of resolve and be misinterpreted as a political signal. It might be better to sail early and then impose any necessary delay on the high seas where the force might be less easily detected.

5. In discussion the following points were made:

a. They had already discussed (2) the difficulty of planning the exploitation phase of the landing operation with the inadequate intelligence currently available to them, and it was possible that this deficiency could not be rectified fully until after a landing. On the other hand, Ministers would probably be reluctant to authorise a landing without a high assurance of successfully repossessing the Islands.

b. The estimate of 15 days for gathering tactical intelligence was a broad figure allowing time for the intelligence to be assessed and disseminated, and for plans to be adjusted if necessary. It might be that in the event this time would be shorter.

c. Once the force left Ascension Island it would lose the advantages of access to an airhead, and of facilities for the embarked troops whose fitness could become a problem. The Navy Department would examine that day whether there would be logistic problems, particularly over the supply of food.

d. Security of the force during any delay needed consideration. At Ascension Island they were reasonably safe from any threat. To a large extent the same would apply off the Falkland Islands once the sea/air Exclusion Zone was effective. They would be most vulnerable if delayed on the high seas before joining the Carrier Battle Group.

Note:

2. COS 25th Meeting/82 Item 5.



e. South Georgia was unlikely to be suitable as a forward operating base, for a wide variety of reasons.

f. The establishment of an effective sea/air Exclusion Zone was a vital prerequisite to Operation SUTTON.

g. The establishment of an effective blockade would require the authorisation of Rules of Engagement permitting action against merchant shipping and civil aircraft.

h. A blockade should be supplemented by harrasing raids, particularly on vital communications. If communications to the mainland could be cut, Argentine morale would be likely to suffer more quickly than by any other means. The Task Force was not equipped to jam communications.

j. The various options for military action short of an assault landing needed to be identified, together with their possible implications. For example, selective operations by Special Forces would be viewed in a very different light from bombing attacks on the airfield.

k. Argentine morale was a critical factor in any decision. If it was already low, the garrison might surrender without an assault being necessary. If it was high, the options were either to mount the assault or to wear them down in a long blockade. The intelligence assessment (3) was that the Argentines had sufficient supplies on the Falkland Islands to last over 2 months, including 30 days of combat.

l. The whole operation required close political, military and diplomatic coordination. This called for careful examination of the possible interaction of these elements, including their public presentation, before deciding or embarking upon any course of action.

6. Summing up, SIR MICHAEL BEETHAM (Representing the Chief of the Defence Staff) said that although political factors might argue for an early departure date, military requirements favoured leaving the Amphibious Force at Ascension Island until 2 PARA Group had been integrated into it; it could still meet the optimum assault date, and

Note:

3. DCDS(I) 26 dated 21 April 1982.

such a delay would be easy to present convincingly to the troops and the public. It would be possible to sail the force earlier, but this would lead to militarily undesirable complications in its subsequent regrouping and possibly in resupply. A decision was needed the next day if the force was to be required to sail at the earliest date. Concluding, he said they would wish to instruct the Assistant Chief of the Defence Staff (Operations) to take account of the views they had expressed in preparing the presentation he was to give to OD(SA) the next day.

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21 April 1982

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Note by the Secretary:

The Committee reconvened at 1100 pm to continue the discussion:

7. Reopening the discussion SIR TERENCE LEWIN stated that he believed further consideration of military and political factors might lead to a recommendation that the Amphibious Group should sail from Ascension Island at the earliest opportunity, ie 23 April. This would provide the Force Commander with the opportunity to exploit any favourable situation developing in the Falkland Islands from about 7 May. The preferred date for a landing would still remain 16 May after 2 PARA Group and INTREPID had caught up. He considered that an early sailing from Ascension Island would provide the Force Commander and Ministers with greater flexibility, and the penalties of possibly keeping the force embarked in the South Atlantic in mid-winter for a longer period before effecting a landing might have to be accepted.
8. In discussion it was agreed that:
  - a. On balance the sailing date of 23 April was preferable to the implications of a delay of several days at Ascension Island.
  - b. In no way would they attempt to dictate to the Force Commander what his selected date for a landing should be, as this should be decided by Commanders on the spot in the light of all relevant information.
9. Summing up SIR TERENCE LEWIN said that they would wish to advise Ministers of their views in the briefing they had arranged in the Cabinet Office the next day.
10. The Committee agreed with the remarks of the Chief of the Defence Staff in his summing up.

(Amended page  
issued 22 April 1982)