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PRESENTATION TO OD(SA) - 22 APRIL 1982

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PRESENTATION TO OD(SA) - 22 APRIL 1982INTRODUCTION

1. The aim of this presentation is to provide a background of where we are now, in military terms; then to outline the timings of main events, discuss military options and summarise decisions required and when they need to be taken.
2. First, the Current Situation as at 6 o'clock this morning, starting with the Argentine ships. The Argentines have kept clear of the Exclusion Zone and generally remain within their own claimed 200 mile territorial limit. In Port Stanley there are two patrol craft, one LST and a naval auxiliary, both of which have been there since before the Exclusion Zone was declared.
3. Now our own force dispositions. The South Georgia Group have already commenced operations. The HERMES Group will RV with the BRILLIANT Group on Monday 26 April to form the Carrier Battle Group. The BRILLIANT Group is currently well outside the range of the Argentine Carrier and land based aircraft. The Amphibious Group could leave Ascension tomorrow, and I will discuss them later.

OUTLINE TIMINGS OF MAIN EVENTS

4. Turning now to the outline timing of main events. I have already mentioned South Georgia.
5. The Carrier Battle Group will arrive in the Exclusion Zone on 29 April to establish sea and air control. The Amphibious Group could reach the Falkland Islands on 7 May at the earliest. By 14 May a further Battalion and INTREPID could reach the area. The Carrier Battle Group could operate

for about one month, which is an estimated period, allowing for intensive flying. No Carrier has ever exceeded a month for such activity, and during that time there will be attrition due to fair wear and tear and possible casualties.

THE FULL EXCLUSION ZONE

6. Turning now to the enforcement of the Exclusion Zone. This will begin as soon as the Battle Group arrives on 29 April - one week today. We must stop, turn back and if necessary shoot down all Argentine aircraft, whether military or civilian, including helicopters. We must also sink warships and naval auxiliaries and prevent merchant ships entering the zone. We shall therefore need to promulgate rules to the world that the Exclusion Zone will apply not only to warships, naval auxiliaries and submarines but also to merchant ships, and aircraft - whether military or civil. Unless these Argentine assets are precluded from the Exclusion Zone in full, then the blockade would be like a sieve.

7. Air superiority throughout the Exclusion Zone will be a key factor. The Eastern half of the Zone is largely outside the range of Argentine mainland based aircraft. The best and most efficient way of ensuring air superiority and of interdicting air resupply is to neutralise Port Stanley airfield. This is the only guaranteed way to close the airfield and deny them the use of their own ground attack and helicopter support assets. The airfield could be put out of action by bombs from Vulcans, operating from Ascension, or by Sea Harrier attack from the Carrier Battle Group. The Task Force Commander could also use his SAS or SBS Forces to take out

Airfield communications, radar and control facilities.

Another option is naval bombardment. The neutralisation of Port Stanley airfield is a pre-requisite to repossess the Falkland Islands. Further Rules of Engagement will be required.

AVM HAYR will now address the use of land-based air.

LAND-BASED AIR

8. You will know that Victors are normally used as airborne tankers, but that we employed this aircraft 2 days ago in the area of South Georgia for maritime reconnaissance. Nine Victors are based at Ascension Island from where they have flown this route (shown on Vu-foil), using four air-to-air refuellings to achieve 2 hours on task and a total airborne time of 14 hours 45 minutes. The results have indicated that ships of the Argentine Navy are not in the vicinity of South Georgia. Further long range Victor reconnaissance sorties will be flown in the South Atlantic as required by the Force Commander, who is well aware that each of these operations is a major undertaking, and since the capability could be extremely valuable to him, it is well worth husbanding.

9. Turning briefly to the Nimrod, you saw last week the area that can be covered by that aircraft from Ascension, but you will be interested to know that 2 Nimrods are being converted quickly by British Aerospace for air-to-air refuelling. Flight trials are expected on the 29 or 30 April, and we expect to have crews operating out of Ascension in conjunction with Victor tankers in mid May. The Nimrod's radius of action could then stretch to the Falkland Islands area.

10. Mention has already been made of the importance of establishing an Air Exclusion Zone around the Falklands, and if such a declaration is to have any real meaning, the Argentinians will have to be denied the use of Port Stanley airfield. Until Sea Harriers come within range of the Falklands, the only aircraft that can put Port Stanley airfield out of action is the Vulcan. This capability should be available at the beginning of next week, when we plan to base 2 Vulcans at Ascension. These aircraft have been modified for air-to-air refuelling so that they can fly with Victor support to Port Stanley using a different series of refuelling brackets from those employed on the South Georgia sortie. The crews have resurrected skills in conventional bombing, having concentrated over the last 7 years on delivering nuclear weapons. Results with live 1,000 lbs dropped during the last 2 days on the Cape Wrath range have been encouraging, and the way in which we would attack the airfield is illustrated on this Vu-foil.

11. Weapon delivery would be made at night to minimise vulnerability, and the attack direction has been selected to avoid Port Stanley by a safe margin. The aircraft would drop 21 x 1,000 lb bombs in a stick that should cut the runway; and supporting facilities and any aircraft parked on the airfield should also be damaged.

12. The application of this form of air power would obviously highlight our long-range capability and our resolve, but it is likely also to have a high political profile.

3. Post-attack intelligence information could be extremely valuable if the Vulcan bombing option is to be exercised. It goes without saying, also, that intelligence on Argentinian equipment, strength, activity and disposition of forces on the Falkland Islands will be a high priority requirement for the commander of the task force in planning his options. Additionally, intelligence information will be especially important in preparing for the insertion of Special Forces. We have no means at present of obtaining this information from within our own resources - other than by aerial reconnaissance.

14. Thus, with your agreement, we have offered to sell the Chilean Air Force two Canberra PR9 aircraft on condition that RAF crews can operate them on reconnaissance sorties in the Falklands area during a hand-over period. The Chileans have accepted this arrangement and have also agreed that Hercules support aircraft can deploy to Chile. All aircraft will operate in Chilean markings and will be based on a military airfield in north Chile which is not marked on any map. It is a secret and well-camouflaged Chilean base, where our aircraft can be hidden in prepared sites among trees. Two other airfields will be used as forward operating bases: PUERTO MONTT, which is available to us by day, and PUNTA ARENAS (which is just 500 miles from the Falklands) and is therefore to be used only by night.

15. The Canberra PR9 can take photographs of the Falkland Islands from high or low level in daylight, and could also record infra-red imagery from low level at night.

16. The Canberras are waiting in Belize ready to fly to Chile the moment clearance is received from the Chileans. They will meet up with the support Hercules now in transit and should be ready for tasking from 27 April. One Hercules will remain in Chile to provide support and a quick getaway if necessary.

17. The new Air Attache, who has already established an excellent relationship with the Chilean Air Force, could be the key figure in concluding one other possible air option: that is, the insertion of SAS personnel by parachute into the Falkland Islands by night. The standard Hercules can go no further than the 3,400 miles between the Ascension Islands and the Falkland Islands, but one of our Hercules was modified at RAF Lyneham last week to carry additional fuel in the freight bay. This will enable it to carry out a low level parachute insertion on the Falkland Islands and then fly on to Southern Chile.

18. The flight from Ascension would be at high level until 100 miles out from the Falklands. The aircraft would then approach the islands in the dark at low level, taking advantage of contour masking to stay out of the Port Stanley radar cover. It would pull up to 2,500 feet to allow the SAS to slide out of the back. The aircraft would return to very low level to clear the Falklands, avoiding Argentinian airspace and Argentinian radar cover en route to Chile. The aircrew for the mission have been selected from our Special Forces Flight. They are trained exclusively for clandestine operations and have carried out extensive work-up training with the SAS during the last two weeks, including the use of image-intensifying night goggles.

19. Clearly, the political implications of landing in Chile at the end of this sortie will need further consideration, but the Commander-in-Chief of the Chilean Ar Force has intimated that he expects to receive RAF aircraft that are in difficulty or emergency. Moreover, we fully expect that our Air Attache will smooth the onward passage of this Special Forces aircraft.
20. Special Forces will have two roles: first and top priority is the gathering of intelligence; second is offensive operations against specific targets. The Task Force Commander needs intelligence on Argentine strengths, locations, mining and beach landing data. The FI cover a large area and it is broadly estimated that 15 days will be needed between insertion of Special Forces, their clandestine movement to observation points to gather information, and to signal back intelligence for use in planning.
21. In addition to the intelligence gathering process, Special Forces, when authorised, can carry out offensive operations to harass occupying forces or in support of a landing. Such operations might include diversionary attacks, raids on key installations, such as the HQ in Grant House, attacks on key personnel or to pathfind for the landing force.
22. The Task Force Commander can insert special forces by helicopter from the Carrier BG or, as you have heard, a Hercules starting from Ascension could para drop the SAS and then land in Chile.
23. Extraction difficulties could arise if insertion by air was used and the Carrier BG with its helicopters was held back for political reason.

24. Exactly how Special Forces could be used will be covered by a later speaker. Commander Carr will now speak about SSN operations outside the Exclusion Zone.

POSSIBLE SSN OPERATIONS OUTSIDE THE MEZ

25. Prime Minister, Gentlemen. My name is Commander CARR and before joining the Naval Staff I was in command of the S Class submarine HMS SCEPTRE and conducted several operational patrols against the Soviet Northern Fleet.

26. At present both HMS SPARTAN and HMS SPLENDID are patrolling the MEZ off the Falkland Islands. If the option of conducting SSN operations against the Argentine Carrier Group was decided upon, it would be necessary to detach one of those submarines from its present patrol area and re-deploy it to intercept the Carrier Group last reported some 90 nm off PUNTA DELGADO and some 480 nm from the Falkland Islands.

27. One SSN could be ordered to proceed North to conduct surveillance and shadowing operations against the Carrier Group, and at the same time to be fully prepared for offensive operations. At a speed of advance of approximately 15 knots, the SSN could be in the vicinity of the Carrier Group in about 36 hours. Obviously the sooner she were to be detached, the earlier she would be in the vicinity of Argentinian Naval Forces. The SSN transit speed of 15 knots would allow good sonar performance against Argentinian Submarines (and two type 209 are known to be at sea) and further allow the SSN to manoeuvre safely in areas of shallow water - less than 100 fms (600 feet).

28. Good intelligence reports of the Argentinian Carrier Group are important for the earliest possible interception of that Group, however, as the SSN nears her goal she could home in using her own passive sensors.

29. Once in position the SSN could maintain a surveillance and shadowing position or be instructed to conduct offensive operations as or when directed. The SSN is armed with both Anti-Ship and Anti-Submarine torpedoes.

30. I should point out that the depth of water is also a matter of concern for the SSN. She is quite happy to operate in water depths of 50 fms (300 feet) but inside this her freedom of manoeuvre and evasion capability will become progressively restricted as the water becomes more shallow. The shallowest water an SSN would wish to operate in in the order of 35 fms which is approximately the same height as Nelson's Column in Trafalgar Square.

31. You will recall from the previous briefing that there are some limitations in communications with Submarines, but so far these have performed satisfactorily.

THE ARGENTINE CAPABILITY TO WITHSTAND A BLOCKADE - (DCDS(I))

Introduction

32. My start point is that an effective sea and air blockade is imposed by 1 May. This assumes that:

- merchant ships will be turned back or sunk
- Stanley Airport is unusable

Size of the Garrison

33. A quick word on the size of the Garrison - which of course bears directly on the landing options. A large brigade group of say 3 or 4 battalions will hold Stanley. If they

decide to attempt to deny us a foothold elsewhere further battalions are needed - say 2 to 4 depending on their intent. This produces a probably force level of 7,000 and a worst case of 10,000.

The Build Up

34. We are not privy to Argentine plans. But we believe they are attempting to build up the materiel they need to withstand a siege of at least two months, during which they may have to fight for 30 days.

35. Based on what a British force would need under similar circumstances and taking account of what they have probably been able to lift in by sea and air, the bill is shown on the vufoil. My deduction is that by 1 May a Garrison of 7,000, or in the worse case 10,000, could be in place with the supplies it needs to endure a siege of up to 2 months and possibly longer.

Counters to the Blockade

36. Now to examine the Argentines' ability to counter the blockade.

37. First - by sea. The Argentine Navy could attempt to break the blockade by attacking the Task Force. But they would be unlikely to risk their surface fleet in a match which they must reckon they would lose. Their two modern submarines are a different matter and they pose a threat. [They may use merchant ships to break the blockade, perhaps using flags of convenience. And a determined ship's captain can only of course be stopped by fire].

38. Secondly - by air. We must assume that the Argentines will attempt to strike the Task Force. But (as you know) they only have an outside chance of inflicting severe damage. Air resupply is ruled out provided Stanley airport is neutralised.

39. Lastly - by exploiting, on humanitarian grounds, the plight of the civil population. But they would be subjected more to hardship than to starvation. The majority of the people of Stanley have moved out - of a population of 1,000 only 150 now remain. This reduces one of the major constraints on the assault (and other operations).

Argentine Vulnerabilities

40. But the Argentines have their flaws:

- a. The airfield - its installations and its land link with the town - is highly vulnerable to attack from the air and on the ground.
- b. Their parked helicopters, on which all movement (reserves, casualties and resupply) depends, are also highly vulnerable.
- c. Their deployment will stretch them out and the hard weather will drive them into buildings. At night, given the inexperience of their soldiers, their outposts make inviting targets.
- d. The supply dumps - at Stanley, in the Marines Camp and elsewhere are soft targets. As too is the single water pumping station.
- e. Communications with the mainland. We know exactly where the Cable and Wireless Station is - we know the

Force Headquarters is in the Governor's House. Both are ideal targets for special forces raids.

f. Finally, if deprived of their commanders, the Argentines probably lack the battle resilience of other more seasoned armies.

41. This leads me to the crux - morale. Most of the Garrison will have been on the Islands for a month when the blockade is imposed. The environment is inhospitable, the weather harsh, the people unfriendly, living conditions primitive and food barely adequate. We now reckon 80% are young - very young - conscripts ill prepared for the rigorous life they face. If reverses elsewhere are rammed home and if, above all, the Garrison is subjected to a vigorous campaign of harassment - from the ground (by special forces) and from the air - its will to fight will be sapped. It will feel isolated and perhaps even abandoned.

Conclusion

42. In sum, the effects of the blockade will only bite deep if they are accompanied by aggressive attrition - directed at the Garrison itself, its hierarchy, its communications with the mainland, its critical stocks and above all the airfield.

43. The Garrison's morale is the crucial, and most vulnerable, element in the Argentine defence. A carefully orchestrated attack upon it, embracing all methods both physical and psychological, has promise of success. From mid-May onwards the Garrison's will to resist may then start to crumble. Thereafter morale will continue increasingly to deteriorate to the point when, in about late July, the Garrison might not offer effective resistance to direct assault.

LANDING OPTIONS IN THE FALKLAND ISLANDS

44. Prime Minister, I would now like to outline our landing options in the Falkland Islands, but before doing so I think it might be useful for me to run through some of the main considerations that were taken into account in formulating the outline plan. We have made two assumptions, which are that South Georgia has been re-taken by the time we land and more importantly, that an effective sea/air Exclusion Zone has been established round the Falkland Islands.

45. It is essential that we obtain up-to-date and accurate intelligence of the Argentine Land Forces. Hence the vital importance of the Advance Force Operations, particularly in an intelligence gathering role, which have already been outlined. We believe an Argentine Land Force could be between 5,000 and 8,000 in strength by the time we land and we expect that their largest concentration will be in the area of Port Stanley, although it is likely they will have Battalions based round the outlying settlements from where they will attempt to watch and cover our possible landing areas. Our Landing Force will number some 5,500, and we expect to achieve an amphibious landing with minimum casualties mounted outside areas of the main concentrations of Argentine defences. The mobility provided by our helicopters should give us tactical advantage. Assuming an air and sea blockade of the Falkland Islands has been effective, Argentine morale and ability to resist will have deteriorated and their capability to react will be reduced provided we have succeeded in knocking out their air and helicopter assets. We retain some flexibility as to our exact landing point.

46. The winter is bleak in the Falkland Islands and the weather can be likened to Dartmoor on a bad day. The weather will have a bearing on the land battle as it will pose morale and survival problems for troops in the open. The bulk of our force is trained and equipped for arctic and mountain warfare operations, but the Argentine forces are likely to be concentrated in the area of settlements where accommodation exists for troops not deployed in the field. The weather will undoubtedly make amphibious operations more difficult, particularly on exposed coasts and prevent parachute operations on many occasions.

47. The Amphibious Force can normally loiter over the horizon ready to land when required. However, this capability will be particularly difficult to sustain in the South Atlantic during winter and therefore we would not wish to keep troops embarked for more than a month at a time. South Georgia, which is 3 days passage from the Falkland Islands, could provide a suitable loiter area for a limited period.

48. We are aware of a number of possible landing areas and the most likely ones that might be used for this operation are shown on this overlay. They will all require detailed reconnaissance, and this would be carried out by the SBS embarked with the Force, by the SAS, or by our air assets. One of the particular difficulties that we are likely to encounter around the Falkland Islands is the presence of KELP, which could prove an obstacle and prevent landings in certain areas. Landing sites, because of the very open nature of the ground, would be easy to find throughout the whole

area, but we must take into account exits from the landing areas for vehicles. The going throughout the whole of the Falkland Islands is extremely difficult, the ground is very boggy and we expect tactical mobility to depend mainly on foot, helicopter and coastal movement in large or small craft. We will be deploying with approximately 70 oversnow vehicles and these should give us some cross-country mobility, but wheeled vehicles are likely to be restricted to the Port Stanley area of on a very few specific tracks. The Argentinians could find their mobility restricted.

49. You have already seen an outline of the key dates. The current optimum date for landing is 16 May. This allows the force to be supplemented by HMS INTREPID, which provides greater flexibility for the initial landing; by the addition of 2 PARA Group in NORLAND as an immediate reinforcement unit; the completion of the intelligence gathering tasks; and the consolidation of the sea/air Exclusion Zone including the "softening up process" on Port Stanley airfield. Any changes to these parameters must be taken into account when selecting the final landing date.

50. This leads on to the outline concept of land operations. We believe that a strong and sustained British presence ashore will be achieved by landing 3 Cdo Bdg, augmented by two Parachute Bn Gps (about 5,500 men), on or about 16 May. The force will establish a bridgehead close enough to exert direct military and psychological pressure against the main Argentine forces in the Port Stanley area. Following special operations and the sea and air blockade, this may be enough to convince

the Argentines that their own position is militarily untenable and that they could honourably agree to withdraw; but the possibility that the enemy may continue to fight fiercely must be allowed for in selecting the position for the Bridgehead. The destruction of Stanley airfield, together with the Argentine air assets, will be crucial in ensuing land operations as we must have superiority in the air and in tactical mobility over the Argentinians. It would be wrong for me to speculate on where the landing will actually take place. This will be very much a matter for the commanders on the spot, but I believe it is likely to be in North East Falkland as close to Stanley as possible while remaining out of range of the artillery and surface to air weapons sited there. Subsequent operations should take advantage of our mobility, firepower and our ability to outflank. We believe a major battle is unlikely, but do foresee a series of damaging and demoralising attacks on his outlying forces, Headquarters and logistic installations separated from the civilian population. It is significant that the Argentinian forces will have been denied any form of resupply for more than two weeks before the optimum date.

51. Possible operations against mainland targets in the Argentine have been considered but, for the present, rejected on both military and political grounds. There is however, one remaining option - to repossess Southern Thule in the South Sandwich Islands, on which an Argentine base was established in 1977. This could take place after we have consolidated our position in South Georgia.

52. Southern Thule is over 400 miles from South Georgia, and we believe about 40 Argentine servicemen are there. However, the seas around the South Sandwich islands are now icing up and icebergs will become a hazard. It would be very unwise to send any ships of the Task Force, apart from ENDURANCE, into these waters after the end of May and she alone could not carry sufficient Commandos to repossess Southern Thule in the face of expected resistance from the Argentinian troops. The Diversion of our assets from the main task in the Falkland Islands led us to discard this option for the present.

53. I will now summarise the timing of the main events.

a. The South Georgia operation. This is currently in hand.

b. Special Forces could be inserted by air direct from Ascension on 25 April with the aircraft landing in Chile.

c. Vulcans could attack Port Stanley Airfield on the night of 26/27 April.

d. Canberra Photographic Reconnaissance could start on 27 April from Chile.

e. Special Forces could be inserted from the CBG on 29 April.

f. The CBG can establish the Exclusion Zone from 29 April.

g. The Amphibious Group could reach the FI on 7 May.

8. 2 PARA and INTREPID could reach the FI on 14 May.

54. Finally I will summarise the decisions required and when they need to be taken.

55. First, to confirm that the Amphibious Group should sail from Ascension tomorrow, 23 April. This timely move will provide the Force Commander with the greatest range of options.

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56. Next, to insert Special Forces to gather intelligence from the FI at the earliest date of 25 April will require a decision today. Political clearance will be needed to land in Chile and, if weather conditions are unfavourable at the time of paradrop and the mission is aborted, the SAS, although in plain clothes, will still be on board.

57. Next, if we are to bomb Port Stanley airfield at the earliest possible moment, the Vulcans must deploy to Ascension Island today.

58. The following decisions need to be addressed in a few days time:

a. The PR Canberra should reach Chile on 27 April and we shall need a decision on the 26th to carry out missions.

b. Next, a decision will be required on 27 April, 48 hours in advance of the Carrier Battle Group arrival, for new Rules of Engagement to cover both sea and air. This will require promulgation on the 27th.

c. Finally, on 27 April, we shall need to obtain your approval to insert Special Forces by helicopters from the Carrier Battle Group on 29 April.