

COS (Misc) 154/742/1

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(03 Peps)

GIBRALTAR DEFENCE CAPABILITY

1. The attached Note has been prepared by the Defence Policy Staff, in conjunction with the Air Force Department, and has been agreed by the Defence Secretariat and the FCO. Also attached is a draft submission to PS/S of S prepared by the Defence Secretariat, together with a draft note for PS/S of S to send to PS/Prime Minister.
2. Unless the Secretary, Chiefs of Staff Committee hears to the contrary by telephone (Ext 6347) by 1500 today, 23 April 1982 it will be assumed that your Principals have agreed the recommendations contained in the Note, and have agreed the attached submissions.

Attachments:

1. DP Note 10/82 (4 pages).
2. Draft Submission to PS/S of S (1 page).
3. Draft Submission to PS/Prime Minister (2 pages).

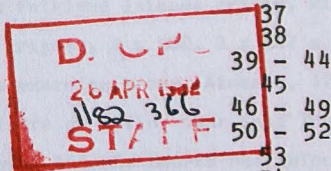
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23 April 1982

COS S21() Covering SECRET UK EYES A

DP Note 10/82 (Final)

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23 April 1982DEFENCE POLICY STAFFGIBRALTAR - DEFENCE CAPABILITYNote by the Defence Policy StaffGIBRALTAR - DEFENCE CAPABILITY

1. Background. At their 22nd meeting the Chiefs of Staff agreed a paper (1), for Secretary of State, on the defence capability of Gibraltar. The paper enumerated the reinforcements already allocated to Gibraltar to which at Secretary of State's direction a Blowpipe Troop has since been added. In addition the paper stated that the threat to Gibraltar would be kept under review in case it was necessary to reinforce the garrison further.
2. Spanish Amphibious Exercise 26 April - 4 May 1982. Since COS 22nd meeting further details of a Spanish Amphibious exercise from 26 April - 4 May 1982 have become known. The exercise, scheduled well before the current Falkland Islands crisis, will include (2) the Marine Amphibious Brigade, 1 x LSD, 2 x LST's and 3 x LCT's. There are two amphibious exercise areas, Almeria, 175 miles East of Gibraltar and a new area, Sierra de Ratin, near Cape Trafalgar, 35 miles West of Gibraltar. The Naval Attache Madrid has informed MOD (3) that the exercise, mounted from Cadiz, will take place in the Sierra de Ratin area and this will not involve the passage of Gibraltar Strait by the amphibious group. It is not known when the amphibious group will depart

Notes:

- (1) Attachment to CDS 2046/1 dated 17 April 1982
- (2) DISUM No 138 of 161101Z April 1982
- (3) AAA/UZE of 191014Z April 1982 - 1 -

iz. It is unlikely to be before Monday 26 April although deployment could commence on Sunday 25 April if the exercise is to start promptly on the 26th.

3. CinC Gibraltar Recommendation. CinC Gibraltar is aware of the amphibious exercise and has drawn attention to the possibility, although unlikely and unsubstantiated, that the Spanish Amphibious Force could use the exercise as cover for an unauthorised surprise attack on Gibraltar. The CinC has requested (4) a flight of Buccaneers armed with TV Martel missiles to counter this threat. He considers such a deployment would be a prudent precaution and unlikely in itself to cause comment as Buccaneers frequently deploy to Gibraltar for exercises. This would not be an on-going commitment.

4. Aircraft Task. Following discussions with the Air Commander Gibraltar in amplification of CinCs request it was agreed that no action could be taken against the amphibious group until they had unmistakably committed a hostile act, which would probably include an attempted landing. At that stage it would be too late to use missile-carrying aircraft to deal with the aggression. However the Air Commander stated that the purpose of the aircraft was to provide discreet deterrence and that this task could be met by aircraft other than Buccaneer.

5. Political Visibility. Buccaneers were last deployed to Gibraltar 22 Mar - 5 Apr 1982 for exercise Spring Train and detachments of pairs of aircraft occur 3-4 times a year. Jaguar aircraft also regularly deploy to the Rock; the most recent deployment involved 2 aircraft in March 1982. So far every effort has been made to minimise the visibility of the measures already approved by conforming to normal

Note:

(4) 1AD/IPD/A3A/KAD of 211430Z April 1982

routine movements. While there must be some chance that the Spaniards, ^{Seeing} ~~(including~~ yet another coincidental enhancement, ^{could} ~~and~~ conclude that Gibraltar is intentionally being reinforced, this risk can be kept to a minimum provided any deployment appears outwardly to be of a routine nature and a convincing cover story has been formulated. Since Buccaneer has never deployed with operational Martel the prominence of this weapon when fitted to Buccaneer would undoubtedly attract unacceptable attention and this would apply, to a lesser but still unacceptable degree, to all external stores carried by any aircraft. This leaves consideration of deploying Buccaneers with internally carried stores or Jaguar with its integral gun.

6. Military Risks. There is military risk that any aircraft based at RAF Gibraltar are vulnerable to artillery or air attack from Spain. However, such an attack would require inter-Service cooperation by the Spanish armed forces, which in present circumstances is judged highly unlikely. The threat under present consideration would originate in the amphibious force as a result of unauthorised action.

7. Options. There would seem to be 3 options in response to the Governor's request.

a. To send Buccaneers in the normal routine training fit. This will provide the 'presence' that is required as a deterrent and a limited offensive capability could be provided by deploying with internally carried stores.

b. To deploy Jaguar aircraft instead of Buccaneers. This would again provide a 'presence' but the gun would allow more flexible capability.

c. To deny the request on the grounds that although the aircraft might serve as a deterrent, in the event of actual aggression by the Amphibious Force, they could not be usefully employed in the defensive battle for the Rock.

8. Discussion. The first option to consider is whether to support the C in C's request and deploy aircraft to Gibraltar. Deployment of even a small number of aircraft would have an undeniable deterrent value although within the existing constraints their full defensive capabilities could not be exploited. Despite the fact that the major reason for deploying aircraft is for deterrence it would be unwise to send them unarmed. Martel and any externally carried stores are discounted because of their high visibility. This leaves Buccaneer with internal bomb load or Jaguar with its guns. Because of the nature of the possible threat a gun equipped aircraft with its multi-attack capability would be more effective. This latter point is particularly relevant when considering the number of aircraft which can be deployed under cover of a routine training exercise. In view of the risks of being seen to reinforce Gibraltar, as already notified to OD, it is important that any deployment should not be seen as being in the context of the Spanish exercise. In the event of public or press interest it must be presented as a routine deployment to Gibraltar such as occur frequently.

9. Recommendations. It is recommended that despite the unusual duration of the deployment and limited offensive capability it would be prudent to deploy two offensive aircraft to Gibraltar from 26 April 1982 until some 2 - 3 days after the Amphibious Force exercise ends. It is further recommended that Jaguar aircraft with its internal guns would be more suitable than Buccaneer's.

DRAFT

To PS/SofS

From PSO/CDS

GIBRAITAR DEFENCE CAPABILITY

1. Chiefs of Staff considered and approved the attached paper relating to a further request from the Governor of Gibraltar for temporary reinforcement of the command. I would be grateful for the agreement of SofS for the necessary action to be put in hand immediately.

2. In view of the continuing interest of the Prime Minister in matters relating to Gibraltar, you may wish to write to No 10 in terms of the attached draft.

RAFT

From PS/SofS

To PS/No 10 Downing St

GIBRAITAR: DEFENCE CAPABILITY

1. With my letter of 19 April I forwarded an assessment of the UK's defence capability on Gibraltar. In your letter of 20 April you recorded that the Prime Minister had noted this paper.
2. We have been aware for some time that the Spanish forces intended to hold an amphibious exercise in the period from 26 April to 4 May. It is clear that the Spaniards planned this exercise well before the Falklands crisis arose. It has now been established that the exercise will take place at a training area about 35 miles west of the Rock. The Governor accepts that it is unlikely that any attempt, whether authorised or not, would be made on Gibraltar by this force; but he considers it prudent to have operational aircraft capable of dealing with such an amphibious group if the necessity to do so were to arise.
3. In these circumstances, my Secretary of State has authorised the deployment to Gibraltar of a force of two Jaguars. These will stay on the Rock for the duration of the exercise and for a further two to three days to avoid giving the impression that the deployment was connected with the exercise.
4. Strike aircraft from UK and RAF Germany have been frequent visitors to Gibraltar over recent months; and every effort has been made to minimise the visibility of the measures already approved to reinforce Gibraltar's defence capability. While therefore there must be some chance that Spanish attention would be attracted by the conjunction of events, and that this would increase political attention, the risk is considered small and can be countered if necessary by a suitable cover story which has been prepared.

5. FCO officials were consulted before this decision was taken.
6. I am copying this letter to Brian Fall (FCO).