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CHIEFS OF STAFF MEETING : 30 MAY

1. Before this afternoon's meeting of OD(SA) you may like a brief note of the main points of interest which arose at this morning's meeting of the Chiefs of Staff.

a) Rules of Engagement

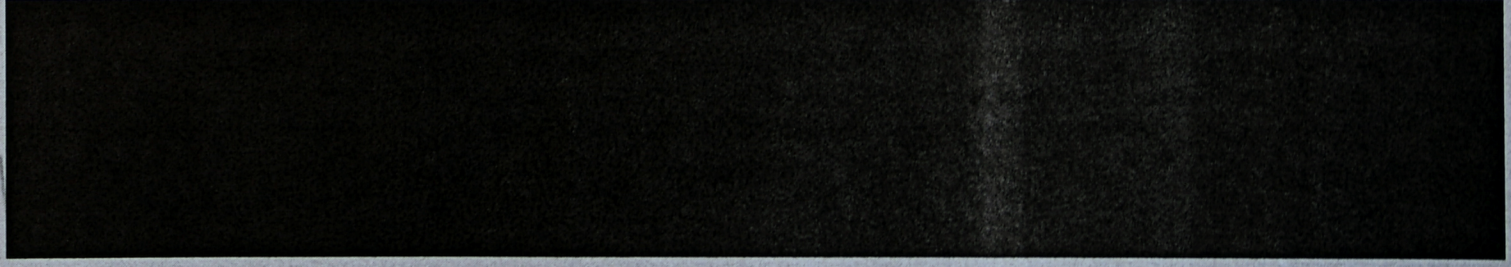
There was no discussion about the expansion of the rules of engagement to cover the 12 miles zone, but the Chief of Defence Staff asked pointedly whether the Argentine carrier was at sea or in harbour. DCDS(I) said that we were not certain. CDS also commented on the news that the submarine Salta was now in Puerto Belgrano, to the effect that the ROE would now be changed too late to catch her.

b) The QE2

The Chiefs of Staff commented very critically on the BBC piece by Christopher Lee which had revealed the position of the QE2 off South Georgia. They believed that this might have led to the first Argentine reconnaissance over South Georgia for some time. In the same context, it was reported that the first ever bombing raid by a C130 had taken place in an attack against the tanker British Wye. The C130 had dropped 8 1000lb bombs (presumably by rolling them out of the back of the aircraft) of which 7 had missed their target altogether. 1 hit the tanker, but bounced off. The tanker is reported to have been 4,00 miles North-East of South Georgia at the time. Since the C130 has a total range of 1700 miles, considerable concern was expressed about the continued vulnerability of the QE2 (which is now on her way back to Ascension, having off-loaded her troops).

c) Other Argentine Air Activity

It was also reported that the raid by Argentine aircraft (either Canberra or Mirage) at 2.00 am yesterday was the first recorded Argentine air raid by night.



/e) Goose Green

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The latest assessment of our casualties in the Goose Green and Darwin operations is 11 killed and 22 injured. There was general agreement that the operation had been remarkably successful, against much higher numbers of troops and the disadvantage of ground and advance publicity. Attention was drawn to a piece by Robert Fox for the BBC which is awaiting clearance in the MOD (since it refers to the loss of a Scout helicopter which has not yet been reported publicly). Everyone thought that the piece (which I have not yet seen) was remarkably good and we have been asked to help distribute it to posts. It should be cleared for today's 1.00 pm news.

f) Public Relations

The only other point on public relations was that the Chief of Defence Staff referred to the fact that President Galtieri had twice in his speeches tried to give the impression of 'poor little Argentina' overwhelmed by the superior forces of a major power. He asked Mr Taylor to ensure that the point was got across to the press that our forces had so far faced considerably higher numbers, and were hampered by the very long distances and superior air power involved.

g) Prisoners of War

There was some discussion of a draft paper for OD(SA) on the handling of Argentine prisoners. I will record this discussion separately, but the paper is likely to come to Sir Robert Armstrong's group on 1 June and to OD(SA) on 2 June.

h) PSYOPS

The Chief of Defence Staff said he thought the time had come to step up psychological operations, and thought that, as a first step, the Commander-in-Chief might be encouraged to drop leaflets over Port Stanley. He also thought that steps should be taken to read out the names of Argentine prisoners of war on Radio Moonshine.

30 May 1982

P R H Wright

cc : Private Secretary      Mr Fenn  
      Mr Giffard                Mr Weston  
      Mr Gillmore