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OO UKMIS NEW YORK

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D E Y O U

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FM FCO 201345Z MAY 82

TO IMMEDIATE UKMIS NEW YORK

TELEGRAM NUMBER 443 OF 20 MAY

AND TO IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON

PERSONAL FOR AMBASSADOR

1. AS YOU KNOW THERE HAVE BEEN BROADLY SPEAKING TWO MILITARY POSSIBILITIES OPEN TO US OVER THE FALKLAND ISLANDS: ON THE ONE HAND OPERATIONS ON THE LINES OF THE RAID LAST WEEK ON PEBBLE BAY, AND ON THE OTHER A FULL SCALE LANDING. YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT IN THE PUBLIC LINE WE SHALL BE TAKING HERE IF A MAJOR LANDING TAKES PLACE, WE SHALL BE DOING ALL WE CAN, AT LEAST IN THE EARLY STAGES, TO OBSCURE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO. THERE ARE MILITARY REASONS FOR DOING THIS AS WELL AS POLITICAL ONES. MILITARILY WE WANT TO AVOID AN IMMEDIATE RESPONSE BY THE ARGENTINE AIR FORCES. POLITICALLY WE WANT TO AVOID A PRECIPITATE ARGENTINE DECLARATION OF WAR WITH IMPLICATIONS FOR OTHER LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES.

2. THE MOD WILL SEEK THE SUPPORT OF THE PRESS WITH THE TASK FORCE TO INDICATE IN THEIR INITIAL REPORTS THAT THERE HAS BEEN ANOTHER IN THE SERIES OF LANDINGS AND RAIDS (ON A LARGER SCALE THAN BEFORE) TO HARRASS THE GARRISON: IT IS A QUESTION OF CONTINUING THE MILITARY PRESSURE THAT WE HAVE BEEN APPLYING THROUGHOUT. ONCE IT BECAME OBVIOUS WHAT WAS REALLY GOING ON, THE PRESS WOULD BE FREE TO SUGGEST THAT WHAT HAD STARTED AS A LARGE SCALE RAID HAD TURNED INTO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MUCH LARGER BRIDGEHEAD.

PYM

LIMITED
HD/DEF D
HD/NEWS D

PS
PS/PUS
MR BULLARD
MR WRIGHT
MR GIFFARD
LORD N G LENNOX

D E Y O U

T O P S E C R E T

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401

pa.

Mr Wright

cc PS/PUS
Mr Bullard
Mr Mallaby
Mr Weston

FALKLANDS ISLANDS: THE MILITARY SITUATION

1. I have reported separately today's meeting of the Chiefs of Staff. After the meeting I spoke to the Assistant Chief of Naval Staff (Operations) and Mr Stewart.
2. ACNS (Ops) told me that the weather forecast for the Falkland Islands region was favourable from the point of view of a landing over the next 24 hours. Thereafter the weather was likely to get worse. I said this did not appear to coincide with the CIA view. ACNS (Ops) said that this was not necessarily the case. The weather might be bad (ie low cloud and rough sea) in the civilian sense; in fact these conditions could be ideal for what was in hand.
3. Mr Stewart enquired about the possibility of delaying the operation for 24 hours, if Ministers so decided. ACNS (Ops) said that this could be difficult. Troops had been cross-decked and were all now in cramped conditions in rough seas on board landing craft and assault ships. I said that our understanding had been that a final decision on the landing could be delayed until about 3 pm London time today. ACNS (Ops) said that the landing could be aborted. It would be much more difficult to delay. A delay would mean that troops had to remain on their landing craft and assault ships out at sea for a further 24 hours. This could seriously diminish their effectiveness. I said that I thought Ministers had probably not been aware of this distinction. My impression was that they understood the final decision could be left open until this afternoon.

20 May 1982

D H Gillmore

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02/03/2024 07:00:32

Closure status: Open

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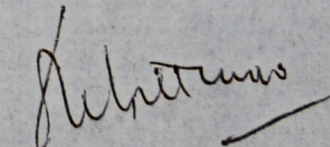
Mr Wright

cc PS/PUS
Mr Bullard
Mr Mallaby
Mr Weston

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D H Gillmore

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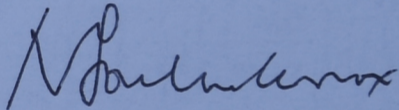
EMM & PA

~~Ed | Reference Dept~~

PS/PUS

cc: Mr Wright
Mr Giffard
Mr Fenn

1. At the PUS's OD(SA) de-briefing this morning, he asked me to draft a telegram to Sir A Parsons and Sir N Henderson about the MOD's intention to try and obscure the facts about an invasion of the Falkland Islands, at least in the early stages, in line with the suggestion put to OD(SA) by Mr Nott. I attach a draft telegram, which reflects a discussion I had this afternoon (after Mr Parkinson's meeting) with Sir Frank Cooper and Mr Wade-Gery. Sir Frank has sent me a copy of the attached telegram making the same point, which has been sent to the Commander of the Task Force.


Lord N Gordon Lennox

19 May 1982

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TOP SECRET

File No.

OUTWARD

Department

Drafted by Lord N Gordon Lennox TELEGRAM
(Block Capitals)

Tel. Extn

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To IMMEDIATE NEW YORK AND WASHINGTON Tel. No. of

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AND SAVING TO

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Distribution:-

(TEXT)

PERSONAL FOR AMBASSADOR

1. ^{As you know there have been} You will I know be aware that there are broadly speaking two military possibilities open to us over the Falkland Islands: on the one hand ~~an~~ operations on the lines of the raid last week on Pebble Bay, and on the other a full scale landing. You should know that in the public line we shall be taking here ~~after~~ ^{if} a major landing ^{takes place} we shall be doing all we can, at least in the early stages, to obscure the difference between the two, ~~for~~ ^{it} obvious operational reasons ~~and~~. ~~It also~~ ^{will}

2. The MOD will seek the support of the press ~~for~~ the Task Force to indicate in their initial reports that there has been another in the series of landings and raids (on a larger scale than before) to harrass the garrison: it is a question of continuing the military pressure that we have been applying throughout. Once /it became

There are military reasons for doing this as well as political ones.

Militarily we want to avoid an immediate response by the Argentine air forces.

Copies to:-

Politically we want to avoid a precipitate Argentine declaration of war with imprecisions for this Latin American countries

TOP SECRET

it became obvious what was really going on,
the press would be free to suggest that what
had started as a large raid had turned into
~~a full scale assault.~~ *the establishment*
of a much larger bridgehead.

[Handwritten scribble]

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN

S E C R E T

PR.
B/C
H.

CXL207 19/1607 139A3325

FOR CXK

Sir Frank Coopers Inst
— Lord Gordon Lennox
Mr MacGnnes

IMMEDIATE/PRIORITY 191407Z MAY 82

FROM MODUK
TO CTF 317
INFO CTG 317.8
CTG 317.0
CTG 317.1

S E C R E T

SIC I9P

OP CORPORATE

1. FOR AT LEAST THE FIRST FEW HOURS AFTER A MAJOR LANDING WE SHALL WANT TO DO AS MUCH AS WE CAN TO DISGUISE FROM THE ARGENTINES THE SCALE AND TRUE PURPOSE OF THE OPERATION. TO DO THIS EFFECTIVELY WE WILL NEED THE CO-OPERATION OF THE EMBARKED PRESS AND MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES. YOU SHOULD THEREFORE ARRANGE FOR THEM TO BE BRIEFED AS FOLLOWS:
 - A. IT WILL HELP A MAJOR LANDING TO SUCCEED, AND MINIMISE CASUALTIES, IF THE ARGENTINE GARRISON, AND THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT, ARE IN DOUBT FOR SEVERAL HOURS THAT IT HAS BEGUN. THEY MAY HESITATE TO COMMIT FORCES TO THE POINT OF DECISION: SUCH AS HOLD BACK LAND BASED AIRCRAFT IF THEY BELIEVE THAT THE MAIN LANDING WILL COME LATER OR SOMEWHERE ELSE.
 - B. WE THEREFORE NEED THE HELP OF PRESS AND MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES. IT WOULD BE HELPFUL IF INITIAL REPORTS COULD INDICATE THAT THIS WAS ANOTHER IN A SERIES OF LANDINGS OR RAIDS (ON A LARGER SCALE THAN BEFORE) TO HARRASS THE GARRISON AND SOFTEN IT UP.
 - C. ONCE IT BECAME OBVIOUS WHAT WAS GOING ON PRESS AND MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES WOULD BE FREE TO REPORT FULLY, (SUBJECT TO NORMAL SECURITY CONSTRAINTS). THEY COULD THEN SUGGEST THAT WHAT HAD BEGUN AS A MAJOR RAID HAD DEVELOPED INTO A FULL SCALE ASSAULT.
 - D. EDITORS IN LONDON ARE BEING BRIEFED IN A SIMILAR SENSE

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S E C R E T