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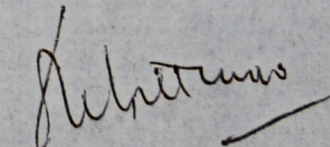
Mr Wright

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