

Private Secretary

cc PS/PUS  
 Mr Wright  
 Mr Giffard  
 Mr Weston, Defence Dept  
 Mr Payne, E.U.  
 Mr Gregory-Hood, E.U.

FALKLAND ISLANDS: MILITARY SITUATION AT 12 PM LONDON TIME

1. The Secretary of State may like an account of the military situation as we know it. This minute updates my earlier note this morning and is based on briefing given at today's Chiefs of Staff meeting. The main points are as follows.

UK Forces

2. The landing operation appears to have gone smoothly. None of our landing ships have been damaged by air attack. In the course of yesterday and throughout the night equipment was offloaded. This included Rapier units. Of the 12 units disembarked 8 are now fully operational. These will be used as an anti-aircraft screen around the landing ships which remain in San Carlos water.

3. Mr Nott will announce to the press at about 1 pm today the sinking of HMS ARDENT. The ship sank after it had been anchored in the Falkland Sound. Survivors were lifted off the ship and put aboard CANBERRA and other civilian ships together with prisoners taken in the assault. All these civilian ships are now well clear of the Falklands Sound and steaming east. By first light today they should be well out of Argentine aircraft range.

4. HMS ARGONAUT, which was severely damaged in yesterday's attack, has been anchored in Fanning Harbour to the north of the San Carlos inlet. The ship is without propulsion but all of its weapons systems are operational.

5. HMS BRILLIANT and HMS BROADSWORD suffered only superficial damage, although a Lynx helicopter on board HMS BROADSWORD was severely damaged.

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6. The unexploded bomb on HMS ANTRIM has been defused and tipped overboard. There are believed to be two more unexploded bombs on HMS ARGONAUT. The Chief of Air Staff believes that the Argentine aircraft are attacking at such low level that a large percentage of the bombs dropped do not have time for the fusing mechanism to work.

7. There is still not much information about the position of our disembarked forces on land. They appear to have encountered little opposition and are now fanning out. I spoke to the Chief of General Staff after the Chiefs of Staff meeting. He told me that he thought that if the deployment of marines and commandoes had gone according to plan they should be sufficiently widely deployed by first light this morning to make them relatively difficult targets for Argentine air attacks.

8. Special forces who carried out attacks on Goose Green yesterday have now regrouped into two units and are moving east in the direction of Port Stanley.

#### Argentine Forces

9. The latest corrected figures for Argentine fixed wing aircraft losses yesterday are 7 Mirage Vs and 7 A4 Skyhawks. The Argentine aircraft were operating out of two bases, Rio Gallegos and Rio Grande. The MOD believe that a total of 26 aircraft from these bases were operational and the total number of missions flown was 35, ie some aircraft flew more than one operation with a turn<sup>-round</sup> time of about 2 hours. In other words, in the air operations yesterday Argentina lost 14 of its 26 operational aircraft, or about 20 per cent of its strike aircraft. 8 of the 14 aircraft shot down are believed to have been hit by Sea Harriers, using Side-winder missiles. No Sea Harriers were lost (one Harrier which went down was a GR3 RAF aircraft carrying out a ground attack mission).

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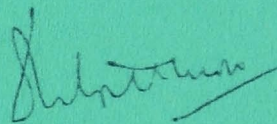
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Weather

10. The weather forecast is unfavourable. Skies are expected to be clear and visibility good. The Chiefs of Staff expect further waves of air attack today.

Prospects

11. The Chiefs of Staff anticipate that today and tomorrow will be crucial. The attrition rate of Argentine aircraft (since the beginning of operations in the South Atlantic they have for example lost about half their Mirage Vs) is likely to have a seriously debilitating effect on Argentina's ability to sustain the rate of attack of the last 24 hours beyond about two more days. Nevertheless, there is a clear risk that there will be further losses of RN ships in the Falkland Sound in the protective screen to the west of the disembarked forces.



D H Gillmore

22 May 1982

P.S. It appears that no Super- Etendard aircraft were used by Argentina in yesterday's attacks