

ALQ 62/3

INDEX

(42)

S. of S. has seen.

~~Def Dept~~ rep.

Private Secretary

cc: PS/PUS  
 Mr Giffard  
 Mr Gillmore  
 Mr Weston, Defence Dept  
 Mr Payne, Emergency Unit  
 Mr Hulse, Emergency Unit

RB

23/15

## FALKLAND ISLANDS: MILITARY SITUATION AT 2.00 PM

1. The Secretary of State may like a brief account of the military situation before his departure for Brussels this evening. This minute up-dates Mr Gillmore's note yesterday, and is again based on briefing given at today's Chiefs of Staff meeting, and a situation report sent to the Prime Minister at noon today.

2. There have in fact been very few reports of incidents for the last 36 hours. A statement issued by the Ministry of Defence at 7.15 this morning is attached.

Flag A

UK Forces

3. Following the successful removal of the unexploded bomb from ANTRIM (para 6 of Mr Gillmore's minute) she has sailed eastwards to join CANBERRA and other ships out of range of shore based air attack. The 2 unexploded bombs in the main machinery compartments of ARGONAUT have also been successfully defused. (At this morning's meeting of the Chiefs of Staff, the Public Relations Officer was asked to avoid references to unexploded bombs, on the grounds that this merely tips off the Argentines on the inefficiency of their weapons.) Two ships (NORLAND AND STROMNESS) were escorted into San Carlos Water overnight to unload further stores and equipment.

4. On land, there have been no incidents. The headquarters of 3 Commando brigade has moved ashore and taken up a position north-east of San Carlos settlement. There are unconfirmed reports that Argentine ground forces may be planning a counter attack, but

/this is





this is more likely to come from the Goose Green or Darwin area than from Port Stanley.

5. In the air, there were 2 reports of action yesterday. Harriers from HERMES attacked military targets in the Goose Green area, including gun positions, vehicles and fuel dumps. Several wrecked Puccara aircraft were seen, which had previously been noted from high level photography. Harriers also carried out an armed reconnaissance at Weddell<sup>/Island</sup> without sighting any targets, although the ex-Falkland Islands company vessel MONSUNEN was sighted south of East of Falkland and will be investigated by surface ships today.

6. Mr Gillmore reported yesterday that 8 of the 12 Rapier units disembarked are now fully operational. At the Chiefs of Staff meeting this morning, it was explained that 9 of these units are in fact thought to be operational, although only one has fired so far (and that unsuccessfully). Although the Prime Minister is said to have expressed some concern about the Rapier position during her visit to Northwood yesterday, the Chief of General Staff thought that 9 out of 12 was a fairly creditable score in the circumstances.

#### Argentine Forces

7. During yesterday afternoon, 6 Argentine Mirage aircraft escorted 2 low flying aircraft which landed in West Falkland, possibly to re-supply. The escorting aircraft returned to the mainland 10 minutes later. Shortly before dusk, 2 A4 aircraft made an ineffectual attack on the ships in San Carlos Water. One aircraft ditched its bomb load at the entrance and the second did not press home its attack.

8. An Argentine Boeing 707 reconnaissance aircraft made contact with the BRISTOL group of ships yesterday, some 1300 miles north east of the TEZ. She was engaged by Sea Dart missiles from HMS CARDIFF, but the missiles appear to have missed as the Boeing turned away.

/Arms Sales





Arms Sales

Flag B 9. The only other military development of note is a disturbing report, which we have asked the Americans to investigate, that Argentinian and Israeli dealers have been meeting in Switzerland to negotiate the acquisition of laser guided bombs for use against our aircraft carriers and the QE2. In view of the Flag C assurances which Mr Haig received from the Israeli Ambassador on 21 May we have suggested that the State Department should draw this latest report to his personal attention.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P R H Wright', with a large flourish underneath.

P R H Wright

23 May 1982