



Copy to:

PS/PUS  
 Sec/CNS  
 AUS(D Staff)  
 Head of DS 11

MO 5/21

PSO/CDSOPERATION SUTTON - INCREASE IN FORCE LEVELS

The Secretary of State had a brief word this afternoon with CDS, PUS and C-in-C Fleet about the request for an increase in the Op Sutton Force levels (CTF 317 signal 27-15 16Z April). CDS explained that the increase requested was for a force of brigade size with necessary supporting assets. The case for this had been discussed briefly with the Commander-in-Chief and would be considered by the COS at their meeting tomorrow. A submission would then be made to the Secretary of State. It would be necessary to take early decisions, by the end of the week, concerning ships to be taken up from trade including the QE2.

2. The Secretary of State commented that this new request would have to be reported at the earliest possible moment to the Prime Minister since it would be relevant to her consideration of the military options open which in turn could influence the Government's reaction to the latest US proposals. CDS and PUS agreed to brief Sir Robert Armstrong and other senior officials at their meeting this afternoon, and to ensure that the Prime Minister's Principal Private Secretary was informed.

3. The Secretary of State also commented that this request for an increase in the Op Sutton Force level could influence Ministers' decision on whether to allow the amphibious force to sail from Ascension on Thursday morning. Commander-in-Chief Fleet indicated that it would probably be possible to sail the (less conspicuous) LSLs on Thursday morning and wait at least 24 hours before sailing the main element of the amphibious force in the larger ships, including the Canberra. The Secretary of State invited him to consider this urgently and authorised him to stagger the departure of the force in this way if this were feasible.

28th April 1982

(D B OMAND)  
 PS/S of S