

DRAFT OD(SA) PAPER**TOP SECRET**

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The attached draft OD(SA) paper will be tabled for the consideration of the Chiefs of Staff at their meeting at 5.00 pm today, Thursday 29 April 1982.

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Attachment:

Draft OD(SA) Paper (6 pages).

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Now that the ^{Carriacou Battle Group} Task Force has virtually reached the Falkland Islands area, the Total Exclusion Zone has been declared and South Georgia re-possessed, it is prudent to review our future military options for fulfilling the Government's overall aims.

The Commander in Chief has been instructed by the Chiefs of Staff to plan to effect a landing with a view to the re-possession of the Falkland Islands. On present intelligence estimates, we must assume that the Argentine garrison on the Falkland Islands numbers some 6-7,000 men or roughly 7 battalions. Against that, with his present forces, the Commander in Chief could land with about 5,500 men, roughly 5 battalions. His military judgement, which the Chiefs of Staff endorse, is that this force level should be adequate to establish a viable bridgehead and advance inland. ^{from which to develop other operations} But if Argentine forces are established in strength in well prepared defensive positions in and around Port Stanley, and given his constraints of minimum damage to civilians and to civilian property, he could face stalemate. Time would not be on our side, and our forces could face air attacks from Argentine aircraft, husbanded during the imposition of our TEZ.

If the Commander in Chief is required to achieve the re-possession of the Falkland Islands as a whole, he ^{will} ~~may~~ need more forces. His judgement, with which the Chiefs of Staff concur, is that arrangements should be made now to deploy the 5th Brigade (and supporting elements) which is trained and

ready for the task. This would give him 3 battalions more - a slight margin of superiority over the currently assessed Argentine garrison. ^{thelios} Additional barriers might also be needed but a decision on timing for these is less critical. The neutralisation of the Argentine aircraft carrier would reduce the risks.

and the removal of operational constraints in respect of damage and casualties ~~to~~ ^{which will also be necessary}

If we are to get these extra forces to the area to meet the earliest date for a landing, we shall have to move fast.

There will be a significant addition to the logistic task. ?

We shall have to take up more ships from trade, possibly going to foreign sources. This is the critical element in the timing. Decisions therefore must be reached now.

Finally, it must be accepted that if we achieve re-possession on military terms without an accompanying political settlement, we need to consider what further military provision must be made. Unless there is some kind of political solution, effectively guaranteed, we shall have to plan on a substantial garrison on the Falkland Islands while the threat remains.

I invite my colleagues to agree.

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MILITARY OPTIONS

1. The Chiefs of Staff have considered the question of force levels in the context of the principal military options and their possible outcomes.
2. At this stage of their consideration, the Chiefs of Staff wish to emphasize that judgements are made against the background of the current intelligence. Clearly, as events unfold and further intelligence becomes available, these judgements could change. The options are at present seen as:

Total Exclusion Zone (TEZ)

3. Full scale enforcement of the 200 mile exclusion zone and the Falklands, by sea and air, is about to be undertaken by the Task Force. This isolation of the Argentine garrison should have a severely weakening effect. It is a necessary precursor to any further option.
4. Offensive Operations by Advanced Forces. To maximise pressure on Argentine forces, early operations while enforcing the TEZ must include a softening up by a steady attrition. Putting Port Stanley airfield out of action will be critical. Other key targets and military installations will need to be attacked by our aircraft. SAS and SBS attacks against Argentine military installations and military personnel will lower the garrison's morale and effectiveness.

5. Action against Argentine Naval Forces. As a condition for later landing operations, early action ^{needs to} ~~could~~ be taken against Argentine naval forces, particularly the carrier and submarines.

6. The combined effect of some or all of these actions could be enough to achieve HMG's objectives, although it is by no means certain.

Landing in the Falklands (Operation SUTTON)

7. After ²⁻³ ~~some~~ weeks of the TEZ, Argentine morale and effectiveness might so decline that conditions were ripe for a quick and successful landing operation. Following the cutting of their lines of communication and the effective harassment of their garrison, Argentine resistance around Port Stanley might crumble; or the political will in Buenos Aires fail.

8. However, a quick success cannot be taken for granted. There is a danger that the force could find, after a successful landing and establishing themselves ashore that 4 or so battalions were dug in and resisting around Port Stanley. The CinC Fleet considers that given his constraints of minimum damage to civilians and civilian property his force might well be insufficient for a complete repossession, and it might come under attack from air and sea forces which had been husbanded. In these circumstances, the advancing winter and the 8000 mile logistic chain would be against us. However the Argentine forces could be portrayed as

the gaolers of Port Stanley, whilst we were in possession of most of the Islands; this might or might not create the conditions for a negotiated settlement.

Operation SUTTON Reinforced

9. If the force were augmented by an extra brigade, we would have a slight margin of superiority in troops. Air reinforcements, particularly Harriers and Helicopters, might also be necessary depending on the degree of attrition sustained and inflicted. Fighting could be heavy and casualties high, and the scale of reinforcement would add significantly to our logistic problems. [This would be perceived as a major change in the scale of the operation and our commitment, and there must be some doubt whether national and international support would hold up.] However, given the required reinforcements, the combined ground, sea and air pressure should then be enough to achieve repossession.

Blockade

10. Allowing for a 14 day passage from Ascension Island, a landing could only be attempted with high chances of success in the following 14 days. Thereafter the effectiveness of embarked troops would decline. If a landing were not attempted, it might still be possible to maintain military pressure through effectively cutting the sea/air lines of communication to the Falkland Islands. This can be maintained ~~with the full~~

pressure ^{at} of our present maritime forces until about the end of July. ^{but with a declining intensity of air operations from the end of May.} Thereafter our naval force levels would have to be reduced to ^{systems the blockade} ~~be kept up~~ over the long haul. Time and weather would take a further toll, particularly of our Harriers and Helicopter capability. The strain imposed on the Argentine garrison would be severe, and might impose a solution; but the logistic as well as international strains on our own forces might be no less severe, with the eventual result uncertain.

Summary

11. The foregoing options are directed to bringing about conditions for an Argentine withdrawal from the Falkland Islands. CinC Fleet's landing operation has so far been planned 'with a view to repossession' of the Falklands. We judge that this is feasible with present forces, but there could be a danger of a military stalemate on the Islands. On the one hand this might create the conditions for a negotiated settlement; on the other hand time would be against us if we have to undertake protracted military operations. If these courses of action are judged unsatisfactory, the Commander in Chief Fleet considers and the COS agree that he would need an extra Brigade. In addition, the Chiefs of Staff ^{consider that the neutralisation of the Arg CVF} ~~believe he could~~ ^{and removal of operational constraints would also be necessary.} need ^{would also be needed} fair reinforcements although a decision on the provision of these is not so urgent. The degree of risk for all our operations will be much reduced if authority is given to neutralise the more important elements of the Argentine Fleet.

Recommendation