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FALKLAND ISLANDS LANDING OPERATIONS - REINFORCEMENTS

In accordance with the instructions (1) of the Chiefs of Staff, the attached draft OD(SA) paper will be tabled for consideration by the Chiefs of Staff at their meeting on Friday 30 April 1982.

Attachment:

Draft OD(SA) Paper (6 pages).

Note:

1. COS 36th Meeting/82, Item 2.

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1. Now that the Carrier Battle Group has virtually reached the Falkland Islands area, the Total Exclusion Zone has been declared and South Georgia re-possessed, it is prudent to review the forces needed for landing operations to re-possess the Falkland Islands.

2. 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 from which to develop further 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.

3. If the Commander-in-Chief is required to achieve the re-possession of the Falkland Islands as a whole in the face of continuing resistance he will need more forces. His judgement, with which the Chiefs of Staff concur, is that arrangements

should be made now to move forward to the area the 5th Brigade (and supporting ^{appropriate combat support} 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. Additional Harriers and helicopters will also be

needed [but a decision on timing for these is less critical.]

[A pre-condition of full re-possession of the Falkland Islands is the neutralisation of the CVR.] ←

4. If we are to get these extra forces to the area to be readily available within 2-3 weeks after 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 ^{and etc} sources. This is the critical element in the timing. Decisions therefore must be reached now.

5. 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.

6. I invite my colleagues to agree that our Task Force in the Falkland Islands should be reinforced with the 5th Brigade and additional Harriers and helicopters, and to note that extra shipping for this task will have to be taken up from trade now.

Annex:

A, Falkland Landing Operations: Reinforcement (4 pages).

FALKLAND LANDING OPERATIONS: REINFORCEMENT

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~~ should lower the garrison's morale and effectiveness.

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

6. The combined effect of some or all of these actions could significantly affect the garrison's will to resist, and might be enough to achieve HMG's objectives, although it is by no means certain.

Landing in the Falklands (Operation SUTTON)

7. After 2-3 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. The timing for carrying out operation SUTTON depends on when the Amphibious Force is sailed from Ascension Island, and sufficient intelligence has been obtained. ^{The earlier a landing} ~~If the force is~~ sailed now, a landing could take place ¹⁵ /about mid May. There follows a window of landing opportunity until about end May. By this time both the effectiveness of carrier borne aircraft and the effectiveness of sea borne troops would be starting to decline.

9. 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. ^{A stalemate could then ensue.} [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.]

Total Repossession of the Falkland Islands

10. The situation described in paragraph 9 above would clearly not meet any wider aims of total repossession of the Falklands by military means. We would be facing a new problem on a different scale from Operation SUTTON. Extra forces will be needed. The Commander-in-Chief has asked for an extra brigade to be moved forward to the area together with appropriate combat support and Harrier aircraft and helicopters. ^{He has also sought the authority to neutralise the Arg. CVA.} (The precise numbers will depend on the degree of attrition sustained and inflicted.) These forces would have to arrive some 2-3 weeks after the main landing and the necessary shipping will have to be taken up now to fit in with the earliest date described in paragraph 8 above. Fighting could be heavy and casualties high,

