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MAINTENANCE OF A BRITISH GARRISON IN THE
FALKLAND ISLANDS

1. The attached Note has been prepared by VCDS(P&L).

2. Unless the Secretary, Chiefs of Staff Committee, hears to the contrary by telephone (Ext 6804) by 1700 on Monday 3 May 1982, it will be assumed that the Chiefs of Staff have agreed its recommendations.

Attachment:

Maintenance of a British Garrison in the Falkland Islands (8 pages).

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30 April 1982

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VCDS(P&L) 127/3/3

MAINTENANCE OF A BRITISH GARRISON IN THE FALKLAND ISLANDSINTRODUCTION(A Note by VCDS(P&L))

1. Following a successful military re-occupation of the Falkland Islands a garrison is most likely to be required, the size of which will depend on a detailed assessment of any remaining threat and the UK's capability of reinforcement and logistic support.
2. CDS agreed a recommendation from VCDS(P&L) (1) that this subject should be studied as follows:
 - a. Assumptions and force levels.
 - b. The associated logistic problems including a recommendation on the balance between air and sea resupply in the longer term.
 - c. The upgrading of Port Stanley airport and its facilities to receive strategic transport aircraft, including an assessment of the additional personnel and materiel to complete the necessary construction.
3. These studies have been completed and circulated (2), (3) and (4).
4. This covering note attempts to draw the three studies together, examines the assumptions made, summarises the conclusions, addresses the subject of priorities, and costs and makes recommendations.

Notes:

1. VCDS(P&L) 127/3/3 dated 19 April 1982.
2. ACDS(Pol) 107/82 dated 23 April 1982.
3. VCDS(P&L) 127/3/3 dated 24 April 1982.
4. DGO/80/2 dated 27 April 1982.

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Force levels are proposed both for before and after airfield repair and enhancement. The worst case, which assumes that reinforcement of the garrison by air is not practicable, has been used as a basis for planning logistic support. If the airfield can be enhanced to take Phantoms, Buccaneers and Nimrods there would then be considerable scope for reducing naval force level requirements. The airfield paper addresses this as well as the strategic transport requirement.

9. Based on the above the force levels used for planning are:

a. Land: 1 Bde Gp with 1 Coy Gp detached to S Georgia;

half Squadron Army Rapier or 1 RAF Regiment Rapier Field

Squadron; a contingency rear link comms det.

b. Air: Initially 12 Harrier GR3 equipped with AIM 9

(to provide air defence in conjunction with embarked Sea

Harriers); 2 Hercules for coastal surveillance; EW and

GCI radar; 8 RAF Pumas or 4 Chinooks, alternatively

6 RN Wessex 5 or 3 Sea King 4s; airfield navigation aids

and communications facilities. After completion of

airfield development Phase 1 for air defence the

Harriers will be replaced by 12 Phantoms and 4 Buccaneers

with Martel. After completion of Phase 2 the Hercules

will be replaced by 3 Nimrods for ASW and surveillance.

c. Maritime: Initially 1 CVS; 2-3 SSN/SSK; 1 LPD;

6-8 DD/FF; 1 Ice Patrol Ship; 5 RN manned trawlers or

equivalent; 1 Forward Repair Ship; appropriate afloat

support including supply ships from trade; an administrative/accommodation ship; MCM forces (if appropriate). As airfield development progresses the level could be reduced, in particular the CVS could be released.

10. The Navy Department were asked (2) to consider the possibility of support maritime operations from New Zealand. This concept has been discarded as the thin skinned warships would initially have to penetrate deeply into the iceberg belt to remain clear of aircraft bases in the area of Cape Horn. Subsequent routing clear of the berg line would make a total passage of about 5,400 nautical miles. This is only 500 miles shorter than would be the more prudent passage from the area to Gibraltar.

11. A garrison, which in the worst case would be a maximum of 5,000 personnel, would be maintained on the Falkland Islands for up to six months. 12. In the severe climate, tented accommodation is only acceptable for a short period after re-occupation and maximum use should be made of both billets ashore and accommodation afloat. Early provision of hutted accommodation would be essential. (It should be noted that tentage, camp stores and engineer stores for 4,500 men will be available in the Falkland Islands area by mid to late May).

13. All resupply must be by sea.

14. There would be no insuperable logistic problems.

Note:

2. ACDS(Pol) 107/82 dated 23 April 1982.

15. Upgrading of Port Stanley airfield to full international airport standard to permit VC10 and large civil aircraft operators is estimated to cost at least £30m and to take 2½ years.

16. The airfield at Port Stanley could be repaired and upgraded by the Royal Engineers for air defence, attack and maritime operations subject to the availability of suitable American matting. The following timescales are based on the day that men, plant and materials become available on site and assumes normal temperate weather conditions. However, gale force winds, snow and ice - which can be experienced during the Falkland's winter - could severely delay completion times beyond those quoted to an extent at least equal to the duration of the adverse weather:

a. Phase 1: Providing the Harriers ashore could undertake initial air defence responsibilities from Field Sites, it should be possible to repair and strengthen the present 4100 ft runway and hardstanding for Hercules coastal surveillance tasks in 4 days. The installation of fuel tanks and Arrestor Gears, with airfield and navigation aids, would enable the first 6 Phantoms, operating at low auw, to be deployed from Day 9; and the further 6 Phantoms and 4 Buccaneers from Day 11. However, it should be recognised that operations from a 4100 ft runway for combat aircraft involve a degree of risk in that in the event of serious failure on take-off or landing it would have to be assumed that the aircraft would be lost. Moreover, operating at low auw over the longer term would not be cost-effective since time on

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patrol would be limited and would therefore require a greater number of sorties to be flown against certain threat scenarios. Hence it would be vital to extend the runway as soon as possible.

b. Phase 2: Lengthening of the runway to 6,100 ft and the provision of a turning circle would permit Nimrod operations at auws up to LCN 45 and would enable the Phantom and Buccaneer to operate at higher weights and with much greater safety factors. This improvement could be completed by Day 22.

c. Phase 3: A further extension to 7,100 ft, together with turning circles at both ends of the runway, could be completed on Day 52. This would enhance the take off performance of the Nimrod and further improve safety factors for all aircraft.

17. The crucial factors related to this time scale are:

a. Availability of men and material which are calculated as 900 personnel, 1,000 tons of plant and equipment and 5,000 tons of stores and material.

b. The weather (paragraph 16).

c. Availability of suitable heavy duty expedient airfield surfacing which can only be obtained from US sources. It is estimated that 150,000 square yards would be required for Phases 1 to 3 at a cost of approximately

£20m. = £133 a sq. yd.

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18. A number of requirements have been identified which have two things in common: they require engineering support and will be expensive. It has not been possible in the time available to quantify fully the cost and level of engineering support nor is it possible, at this stage to accord priorities. The requirements are:

- a. Repair, strengthening and lengthening of the Port Stanley runway.
- b. Provision of facilities at the airfield.
- c. Provision of hutted accommodation.
- d. Repair and improvement of public services.

BASIS OF RECOMMENDATION

19. The level of garrison to be maintained and the timing of the reduction of forces are very much dependent on the concept of operations or any settlement leading to re-possession and the subsequent assessment of any remaining threat. However, if a Garrison is to be provided within the timescale postulated, in view of the long lines of communication and the dependence on shipping for the task, it is necessary now to proceed with logistic planning. The most urgent problem has been assessed as the re-establishment of an operational airfield at Port Stanley. In this respect, the currently embarked capability for damage repair is limited to ten 16m x 16m repair patches with a temporary life expectation of approximately one month.

RECOMMENDATIONS

20. Should the Chiefs of Staff wish to proceed with planning for a Garrison on the Falkland Islands along the lines postulated I recommend that they agree:

- a. For basic planning purposes the force levels at para 9 above should be used.
- b. Planning for Phases 1, 2 and 3 of the airfield improvement should proceed.
- c. 150,000 sq yds of US AM2 heavy airfield matting and accessories should be procured as a matter of urgency from the US Department of Defence.
- d. Subject to the availability of AM2 matting, the necessary engineer personnel, plant and materiel should be embarked within the next two weeks.

21. It is further recommended that the Chiefs of Staff note that:

- a. The early provision of hutted accommodation will be essential to make good the shortfall of billets and accommodation ships.
- b. Further study is necessary to establish the priorities for work and to cost the facilities to be provided.
- c. The development of Port Stanley airfield to permit use by VC10 aircraft would take 2½ years and cost at least £30m.

30 April 1982

VCDS(P&L)