

DS6/200/82

D/DS6/7/16/49

APS/S of S

- Copy to:
- PS/PUS
- MA/CGS
- PS/DUS(Army)
- DMO
- DASD
- AUS(D Staff)
- AUS(GS)
- Head of DS11
- DPR(Army)

OP CORPORATE: USE OF GURKHAS

1. We spoke this morning about the impending decision on the deployment of 5 Infantry Brigade and its implications for 1/7 Gurkha Rifles. You advised that it would be appropriate for Secretary of State to write to the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary before tomorrow's meeting of OD(SA) to make clear that a decision to deploy 5 Brigade involves a decision to deploy 1/7 Gurkha Rifles. I attach an appropriate draft. This has the support of the Army Department.

30 April 1982

[Signature]
 B MILLER
 Head of DS6
 MB Ext 7036

*no note -
 I will raise*

soys
 This arrived after you left *Sz*

yes, gather that you agreed the policy with CGS. It would be worthwhile to raise it orally at OD(SA) tomorrow. Gather that the FCO at official level are reasonably relaxed. } 1/5

DRAFT LETTER FROM SECRETARY OF STATE TO THE FOREIGN SECRETARY

OD(SA) , which is to be considered tomorrow discusses the need to bring forward 5 Infantry Brigade to reinforce the Task Force. As you may know this brigade includes a Gurkha battalion, 1st Battalion the 7th Gurkha Rifles. In fact, as a result of earlier deployments for Op CORPORATE this is the last remaining battalion of the 3 originally forming the brigade. The other 2 battalions (the 2nd and 3rd battalions of the Parachute Regiment) have been attached to the Task Force, and whilst they have been replaced, a last minute removal of the Gurkha battalion from the brigade would severely reduce the cohesion of the formation. 1/7 Gurkha Rifles have just completed two weeks intensive training in Wales with the newly constituted brigade and have incidentally been seen on television carrying out this training. Furthermore, to divide the brigade in this way on the eve of an operational deployment would severely effect the morale of both the battalion and the Gurkha Brigade as a whole, because it would raise questions in their minds about the extent to which we regard them as an integral part of the British Army and as effective fighting troops. No amount of protestation about the political factors would remove these doubts.

I very much appreciate the political dimension to the possible use of Gurkhas in this operation. I also understand the view that it is possible that this could rebound in terms of our relations with Nepal. The time has, however, been reached / when military necessity justifies certain political risks and of course 5 Brigade would only be deployed initially as reinforcement for 3 Commando Brigade. It is by no means certain that the Gurkhas will see action and by the time they do the need will be fully apparent.

SECRET

I therefore consider that there should now be no question of removing the Gurkha battalion from 5 Infantry Brigade. If tomorrow we decide to deploy the brigade it should be on the basis that it will include the Gurkha battalion.

Naturally the PR for this will need very careful handling and the timing of our approach to the Nepalese Government will need careful consideration. We must, of course, look to your officials for advice.

Copies of this letter go to OD(SA) colleagues.

OD(SA)
OD(SA)
1cc Maj Fairbrother
1cc of 153
1cc of 210(137)

INCIDENT AT WEST BANG

1. US of 153 will visit to be aware of a strike accident which occurred today at the West Bang range.
2. At 10:00 hrs the team was sent on to the range today to defuse any unexploded bombs which may have remained after practice live bombing with 153/154 cluster bombs yesterday. At about 14:00 a bomblet exploded killing outright one member of the team and seriously injuring three others. One of these three is believed to have died subsequently.
3. The gross facts have been informed and a Board of Inquiry into the incident will be convened in due course.

20 Apr 53

[Handwritten signature]
1cc of 153

SECRET