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PRESS ANNOUNCEMENT: 3RD MAY:
5 BRIGADE AND QE2

Following discussion at the Defence Operations Executive this morning, the attached Press Statement to be made at 12 noon today was cleared with No 10 and with the Secretary of State. The doubts which had been expressed at Chequers yesterday about making the announcement so soon stemmed from our own Secretary of State who was anxious that Parliament should be informed first. He is however, as I explained at the meeting, now content to see the announcement made today in view of the pressure from Cunard.

2. You may release this text during your press briefing today.
3. DASD has separately agreed to inform the Household Division that the announcement is being made.

CHIEF OF DEFENCE STAFF

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PRESS ANNOUNCEMENT ON DEPLOYMENT OF 5 BRIGADE AND REQUISITION OF QE2

(Noon 3rd May 1982)

As part of our current plans 5 Infantry Brigade, having completed a period of training, are being brought to short notice to move forward to the South Atlantic area. The Brigade is stationed in the United Kingdom and is already earmarked for out of area duties. Authority has also been given to take up the shipping necessary to transport the Brigade and work to prepare the ships for this role is being set in hand.

This action is being taken because it is only prudent, when contemplating operations - of whatever kind - so far from the UK, to have reserves available nearer the theatre.

Among the ships being requisitioned is the QE2. The Ministry of Defence of course greatly regrets the inconvenience caused to intending passengers, but the QE2's speed, size and facilities make her uniquely suited to carry substantial numbers of troops who must be kept fit and ready for operations, should they be required.

At the same time as the QE2, we are requisitioning two roll-on-roll-off ferries, 'Baltic Ferry' and 'Nordic Ferry' and a container ship, 'Atlantic Causeway' which will be used to transport the helicopters needed for the air support of the brigade.