



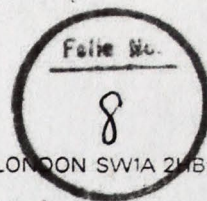
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Monsieur le General d'Armee J Lacaze
Chief of the Defence Staff
14 Rue St Dominique
Paris 7eme
France

4th May 1982

My dear General:

I hear from our Defence Attache in Paris, Air Commodore Parker that you would be interested in an account of our operations in the South Atlantic so far. Official Argentine communiques of recent events in the Falkland Islands area are wildly inaccurate and can only be directed towards maintaining the morale of their people. I am glad to be able to send you this note, and in addition I can assure you that UK Government official communiques are factual and accurate. You will be interested to hear, incidentally, that Argentina is jamming BBC World Service transmission which is an indication of their wish to hide the truth from their people.

The invasion of the Islands on 2 April caught us by surprise and almost totally unprepared to mount a military operation 8000 miles from these shores. The Government's reaction was firm and resolute and the Ministry of Defence was given the task of repossessing the Islands. A major task force was assembled over the weekend of 3/4 April with most units sailing on Monday 5 April. Swift action by our Ambassador to the United Nations led to the passing of UN Resolution 502 calling for the withdrawal of the Argentine forces from the Islands. French assistance during this crucial Security Council Vote was much appreciated particularly your influence with Togo and Zaire. Ever since we have been conducting this operation in accordance with UN Charter Article 51 which is our right to act in self defence. Subsequent action by members of the EEC by placing an embargo on trade and the ban on arms shipments to Argentina has been most encouraging and I believe augurs well for the future of the European Committee.

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The speed by which major units sailed from the UK was encouraging but passage time precluded any naval surface action until the end of April and lack of air bases/friendly countries in the South Atlantic precluded any immediate action by the Royal Air Force. The unit which could apply pressure quickly was of course the SSN with a high submerged speed and no support requirement: this enabled the UK to declare a Maritime Exclusion Zone on Monday 12 April. The Argentines took note but continued to build up their forces by air; no attempt was made to penetrate the Exclusion Zone with naval forces.

Requisition of ships from the Merchant Fleet has gone well and has been essential to provide continued logistic support at that great distance from our base. The use of Ascension Island has been invaluable in mounting this operation, and so also has the support provided by Senegambia at Dakar and Banjul, and the use of fuelling facilities at Freetown in Sierra Leone.

The first success of this operation was the recapture of South Georgia. A small unit with tanker support was detached from the main force and made best speed to the area of South Georgia. Special force units were landed but the assault was delayed by appalling weather until 25 April when the Argentine forces surrendered after only two hours. We were fortunate in catching an Argentine submarine on the surface near the main harbour of GRYTVIKEN and subsequently putting it out of action by ASM from ship's helicopters.

The main task force's progress was delayed in the latter stages by bad weather but nevertheless enabled us to declare a Total Exclusion Zone on 30 April. The object of the TEZ is to isolate the Argentinian forces in the Islands, preventing any further re-inforcement and eroding the morale of the largely conscript Army before taking further action to gain repossession. The first action was an impressive bombing mission against the airfield at Port Stanley by a Vulcan bomber in the early hours of Saturday 1 May with the aim of denying the Argentines the use of the airfield. This mission was made possible by in-flight refuelling with a total sortie time of almost 15 hours. The Vulcan's attack was followed up by a dawn strike of Sea Harriers from HERMES and INVINCIBLE using 1000 lb bombs. The Harriers, too, attacked Port Stanley airfield and also a small airfield at Darwin. Photo-reconnaissance of both airfields showed considerable damage to the runway, destruction of parked aircraft and bulk storage depots. All aircraft returned safely to their units. The Task Force Commander ordered a 4.5 inch gun bombardment of Port Stanley airfield by one destroyer and two frigates which proved effective although the ships came under high bursting shore battery fire. During the bombardment the Argentine Air Force attempted an air attack on the task force using 3 Canberra bombers escorted by Mirage III's. One Canberra was shot down and one badly damaged; one Mirage was destroyed by a Sea Harrier and I have no doubt that the air combat training you kindly agreed to greatly increased our pilots' confidence. Another Mirage was brought down by Argentine gunfire from Port Stanley. Just before midnight on this eventful 1 May, a night ASW action was carried out by helicopters and ships; the

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contact was prosecuted and weapons dropped but no firm results were observed. Sunday 2 May was uneventful but in the early hours of 3 May, a successful submarine attack was carried out against the Cruiser BELGRANO causing considerable damage. Later two patrol vessels were engaged with ASM from Lynx helicopters; one vessel was sunk and the other disabled.

I hope this short summary of recent events is useful. I expect further action shortly and believe that the Argentine Navy will commit its CVA and escorts to an attack on the UK Task Force. I remain concerned at the submarine threat to the force particularly HERMES and INVINCIBLE. The weather is bad and I am sure will get worse but the Task Force morale is high.

I conclude by restating the Government's aim which is to repossess the Falkland Islands following this illegal invasion by Argentina. To this end, we intend to use the minimum amount of force necessary and trust that a combination of force and diplomatic negotiation will lead to the withdrawal of Argentine forces with minimum bloodshed. However, we cannot afford to take risks when the lives of our own men are at stake. The 1,800 Falkland Islanders who are hostages of Argentine aggression are of tremendous concern to us here.

With all good wishes and again
my thanks for your help and
support

Yours sincerely
Lawrence Lawrie

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FOR POSSIBLE USE OF CDS IN BRUSSELS.

Folio No.
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From: Air Commodore D C G Brook RAF
Principal Staff Officer to the Chief of
the Defence Staff



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Air Commodore J M A Parker AFC RAF
Defence Attache
Paris
c/o Foreign and Commonwealth Office
King Charles Street
London SW1

4th May 1982

Dear John,

Enclosed is the letter you requested from
CDS to General Lacaze. I decided against a
signal because as you can imagine the signals
traffic leaving MOD has increased greatly over
the past 6 weeks!

*Yours ever
David.*

Enc

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