

COS (Misc) 212/742/1

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MILITARY OPTIONS - OPERATION CORPORATE

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The attached paper, prepared by ACDS(Pol) in accordance with instructions (1) of the Chiefs of Staff, will be tabled for the consideration of the Chiefs of Staff at their meeting on Thursday 13 May 1982.

Attachment:

Military Options - Operation CORPORATE (18 Pages).

Note:

1. COS 43rd Meeting/82, Item 5.

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12 May 1982

COS S27(5)

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DP 12/82

12 May 82

DEFENCE POLICY STAFF

MILITARY OPTIONS - OPERATION CORPORATE

1. The Chief of the Defence Staff has directed (1) that the Defence Policy staff should revise the paper (2) setting out the military options for Operation CORPORATE.
2. In accordance with instructions we have consulted the Single Service Departments, the Defence Secretariat and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and have differentiated between those options already implemented and those available for future consideration. The options currently falling into these two categories are identified at Appendices A and B respectively. An attempt has been made to grade these options in ascending order of politico/military impact but this assessment must necessarily be subjective and will change as the situation develops.
3. The adequacy of air support, including the achievement of local air superiority, is a pre-requisite to most of the options relating to the repossession of the Falkland Islands and a key factor in sustaining operations. We consider that the Chiefs of Staff will wish to consider further the probable need to replace HERMES and INVINCIBLE in August. ILLUSTRIOUS is being brought forward and should be capable of deploying to the operational area in the required timeframe. The possibility of reactivating BULWARK or alternative solutions including the acquisition of an ex-USN LPH are being investigated.
4. We recommend that the Chiefs of Staff take note of the options detailed at Appendices A and B and instruct the Defence Policy Staff to keep them under review.

Annex:

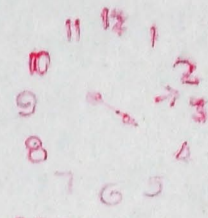
- A. Military Options - Operation CORPORATE (17 pages).

Notes:

1. COS 43rd Meeting/82.
2. Attachment to COS(Misc) 202/742/1 dated 5 May 1982.

ACDS(Ops)
ACNS(OP)
DMO
ACAS(Ops)
AUS(D Staff)
FCO(Def Dept)

14 MAY 1982



ARMY OPERATIONS ROOM

MILITARY OPTIONS - OPERATION CORPORATE

References:

- A. COS 43rd Meeting/82 Item 5
- B. COS 50th Meeting/82 Item 5

1. As you know the Chiefs of Staff today held their weekly review of the paper Military Operations - Operation CORPORATE. CDS directed that the paper should be updated.

2. To assist preparation of the updated paper for next Thursday 20th May I would be grateful if amendments could be forwarded to DPS(C) Room 7128 by 2000 hours on Monday 17th May.

3. Should a two star clearance meeting be necessary arrangements for a convenient time etc will be made in due course.

M J EVANS
Colonel
for ACDS(Pol)
Ext 7419 MB 7128

14 May 1982

| ARMY OPERATIONS ROOM | |
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ANNEX A TO
ATTACHMENT TO
COS(Misc) 212/742/1MILITARY OPTIONS - OPERATION CORPORATE

1. Options in ascending order of politico - military impact are set out below:

At Appendix 1 - Options in Hand:

Option 1: Psychological Operations

2: Total Exclusion Zone

3: Harassment operations against the Argentine Garrison by Air and Sea attacks

4: Extension of operations against the Argentine Garrison by Special Forces or Commando raids

5: Unrestricted attacks against Argentine naval units or military aircraft more than 12 nm from the Argentine coast.

At Appendix 2 - Future Options:

Option 6: Repossession of South Sandwich

7: Prolonged cutting of Argentine lines of communication to the Falkland Islands

8: Landing with limited aim of establishing a secure military presence on part of the Falkland Islands without attempting to evict Argentines

9: Landing with aim of full and rapid repossession of the Falkland Islands

10: Mining mainland Argentine ports

11: Blockading mainland Argentine ports

APPENDIX 1 TO
ANNEX A TO
COS 27(5)

Selected

- 12: Attack Argentine mainland targets
- 13: Landing Southern Argentina (Tierra del Fuego)
- 14: Increased military cooperation with Chile
(including possibility of formal military alliance)

OPTION 1

1. OPTION

2. FORCES REQUIRED/AVAILABLE - Special.

3. TIMING - From now.

Appendices:

- 1. Options in hand.
- 2. Future Options.

CONS

Political:

Might call into question UK integrity.

Military:

Effectiveness limited and difficult to assess.

Supportive of other measures; not a decisive measure in its

Low cost.

Military:

Preparation already in hand.

Confuses enemy's Command and weakens morale.

Feasibility:

- (1) Feasible.
- (2) Action in hand.

OPTION 1

- 1. OPTION - Psychological Operations.
- 2. FORCES REQUIRED/AVAILABLE - Special.
- 3. TIMING - From now.

PROS

Political:

Low cost.

Military:

Preparation already in hand.

Confuses enemy's Command and weakens morale.

CONS

Political:

Might call into question UK integrity.

Military:

Effectiveness limited and difficult to assess.

Supportive of other measures; not a decisive measure in itself

Feasibility: (1) Feasible.
(2) Action in hand.

OPTION 2

1. OPTION - Total Exclusion Zone.
2. FORCES REQUIRED/AVAILABLE - Task Force as deployed and Vulcans.
3. TIMING - In effect now.

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Military:

Neutralisation of Stanley Airfield has enhanced impact of TEZ and denied aerial resupply.

Ability to strike from long range has had immediate impact on sense of domestic security within mainland Argentina. Likely to tie down air defence assets to defend key areas remote from area of conflict.

Harriers/Naval Bombardment

Military:

Selective attacks likely to weaken garrison capability and resolve.

Other features of military importance eg. airstrips, radar/POL/ammunition sites are being attacked discriminately.

Feasibility: (1) Possible now.

Political:

Some risk of civilian casualties and damage to infrastructure.

Military:

Some risk of attack by guerrillas

OPTION 3

1. OPTION - Harassment Operations against the Argentine Garrison by Air and Sea Attacks.
2. FORCES REQUIRED/AVAILABLE - Vulcans, Harriers, DD/FF.
3. TIMING - From 30 April.

PROSCONSVulcansMilitary:

Neutralisation of Stanley Airfield has enhanced impact of TEZ and denied aerial resupply.

Ability to strike from long range has had immediate impact on sense of domestic security within mainland Argentina. Likely to tie down air defence assets to defend key areas remote from area of conflict.

Harriers/Naval BombardmentMilitary:

Selective attacks likely to weaken garrison capability and resolve.

Other features of military importance eg. airstrips, radar/POL/ammunition sites are being attacked discriminately.

Feasibility: (1) Feasible now.

Political:

Some risk of civilian casualties and damage to infrastructure.

Military

Same risk of attribution to own forces.

OPTION 4

1. OPTION - Extension of operations against Argentine garrison by Special Forces/Commando raids.
2. FORCES REQUIRED/AVAILABLE - SAS/SBS/Commando forces embarked in Task Force and Amphibious Task Force. SAS parachute forces operating from Ascension.
3. TIMING - Special forces capability from 30 April. Commando capability from 19 May.

PROSPolitical:

Successful attacks on high value targets would be consistent with minimum use of force, and would demonstrate HMG's resolve to take action against the Garrison without putting the civilian population at risk. Some possibility of influencing Argentine Government to negotiate.

Military:

Scale and nature of attacks can be graduated and controlled to achieve disproportionate and accumulative effect.

Useful preparation for subsequent landing operation.

Confusing command and eroding the will to defend.

Feasibility:

- (1) Feasible now.
- (2) Feasibility will increase when Hercules are provided with extended range capability.

CONSPolitical:

The destruction of targets such as water and power supplies could cause hardship to civilian population.

The failure of a Special Forces/Commando operation could present the Argentines with a significant propaganda weapon.

Limited influence on negotiations (depending on scale of activity).

Could lead to reprisals against civil population in Falkland Islands.

Military:

In the event of something going wrong, extraction could be difficult.

Risk of attention to our forces

OPTION 5

1. OPTION - Unrestricted attacks against Argentine Naval Units or military aircraft more than 12 nm from the Argentine coast.
2. FORCES REQUIRED/AVAILABLE - Sea and Air forces deployed.
3. TIMING - As required.

PROSPolitical:

Potential for clear and early success if enemy presents targets.

Sinkings might bring Argentine to negotiate more seriously.

Demoralising to Argentine public opinion and garrison.

Military:

Sinkings, particularly Argentinian CVA and SSK, will enhance chances of success of TEZ or landing.

Lessens subsequent risk to UK assets.

Smaller UK garrison of FI might be needed in wake of re-occupation.

- Feasibility:
- (1) Feasible now - but at cost of reassigning forces allocated to enforcing TEZ.
 - (2) Current constraints are self-imposed.

CONSPolitical:

High visibility of success could engender strong OAS/World reaction against UK; could alienate our friends and engender increasing political pressures at home.

Spread of conflict area could arouse adverse international reaction.

Possible reprisals, or unrestrained mob attacks, against UK civilians on mainland.

Military:

Not an option if the Argentine fleet remains in port.

May conflict with requirement to enforce TEZ.

Increased risk of attrition to own forces.

OPTION 6

1. OPTION - Repossession of South Sandwich.
2. FORCES REQUIRED/AVAILABLE - Current dispositions.
3. TIMING - From mid-May.

PROSPolitical:

Might have some relevance to UK stake in Antarctica.

Military:

Small scale operation.

Military:

Isolation of Argentine Forces on Falkland Islands would erode will and capacity to counter subsequent landing.

Attrition could be imposed on Argentine naval and air forces (provided that they present

Feasibility: Already of doubtful feasibility on account of ice and existing commitments.

Feasibility: This option is a necessary and integral to our objective of wearing down the Argentine Garrison's morale and will to fight. However the air E2 cannot be sustained over a prolonged period without the eventual replacement on station of HERMES and PV MIDDLE. In this context action is in hand to bring forward ILLUSTRATIONS for deployment in August, and to assess prospects for re-establishing BULWARK in an operational state by about September. Further consideration is necessary to determine whether, as another option, it would be possible to lease a United States LPH for timely deployment. Whichever option is selected, it will be necessary to deploy additional Harrier GR3 aircraft to the Falklands area.

A2 - 1

COS S27(5)

SECRET UK EYES A

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SECRET UK EYES A

OPTION 7

1. OPTION - Prolonged cutting of Argentine lines of communication to Falkland Islands - 'Blockade'.
2. FORCES REQUIRED/AVAILABLE - Task force as deployed up to end August; thereafter it will be necessary to find replacement platforms with an organic air capability. Options are addressed below.
3. TIMING - From 2 May.

PROSPolitical:

Graduated increase in pressure on Argentine.

Maintains political objective with minimum risk to our forces.

Obviates risk of civilian casualties among Falkland Islanders.

Minimises risk of potential action against neutral shipping and aircraft.

Might in time be sufficient to create favourable climate for negotiated withdrawal.

Clearly related to self defence.

Military:

Isolation of Argentine Forces on Falkland Islands would erode will and capacity to counter subsequent landing.

Attrition could be imposed on Argentine naval and air forces (provided that they present targets to our forces).

Feasibility: This option is currently feasible and integral to our objective of wearing down the Argentine Garrison's morale and will to fight. However the air EZ cannot be sustained over a prolonged period without the eventual replacement on station of HERMES and INVINCIBLE. In this context action is in hand to bring forward ILLUSTRIOUS for deployment in August, and to assess prospects for reclaiming BULWARK to an operational state by about September. Further consideration is necessary to determine whether, as another option, it would be practical to lease a United States LPH for timely deployment. Whichever option is selected, it will be necessary to deploy additional Harrier GR3 aircraft to the Falklands area.

A2 - 2

CONSPolitical:

Could impose some hardship on Falkland Islanders/engender reprisals against UK citizens on mainland.

Could imply acceptance of prolonged crisis.

Military:

Long term degradation of UK commitment to NATO.

Attrition of our own maritime assets could prejudice effective enforcement of blockade.

OPTION 8

1. OPTION - Landing with limited aim of establishing a secure military presence on part of the Falklands without attempting to evict Argentines.
2. FORCES REQUIRED/AVAILABLE - Task Force and Amphibious Landing Force as presently constituted.
3. TIMING:- 19 - about 31 May.

PROSPolitical:

Negotiation might be possible free from the strong emotions which might be generated by more direct confrontation.

Might help to secure mutual withdrawal.

Civilian casualties and damage could be kept to minimum.

Maintains political initiative consistent with minimum use of force.

Military:

Control of part of Falklands could be established.

Might be possible to establish base ashore for Harrier/support helicopter operations which would reduce the pressure on embarked air assets.

Feasibility: (1) Increased if TEZ fully enforced during the preceding period and softening up operations vigorously conducted.

(2) Could be attempted without need to commit 5 Bde.

(3) Weather conditions, extended supply lines and need to defend high value merchant shipping and landing area over a potentially lengthy period demand air and maritime superiority of an order that might be difficult to achieve. Neutralization of Argentinian CVA and SSK would greatly enhance success.

(4) Loss of key combat or sealift units would preclude the operation.

(5) Increased if Comodoro Rivadavia, Rio Gallegos and Rio Grande airfields could be denied to the Argentines.

CONSPolitical:

Could lead to long term operations and stalemate.

Military:

Danger of a prolonged campaign with additional need to defend fleet and landing force against air attack.

Limited military advantage with many of the risks associated with full repossession. Need to support effort - military and logistic - could detract from enforcement of TEZ.

OPTION 9

1. OPTION - Landing with aim of full and rapid repossession of the Falkland Islands.
2. FORCES REQUIRED/AVAILABLE - Task Force and Amphibious Landing Force as presently constituted with addition of 5 Bde Gp from 26/27 May.
3. TIMING - 19 - about 31 May.

PROSPolitical:

Direct and unambiguous demonstration of HMG's resolve.

Climate could be created for negotiated settlement.

Military:

Concentration of force would put early and maximum pressure on Argentine garrison.

Possibility of evicting Argentines militarily.

Most direct means of attempting to restore British control.

Feasibility:

(1) Not feasible without 5 Bde Gp and additional Harrier and helicopter support. Potential for success increased if TEZ fully enforced during preceding period and softening up operations vigorously conducted.

(2) Weather conditions, extended supply lines and need to defend high value merchant shipping and landing area over a potentially lengthy period demand air and maritime superiority of an order that might be difficult to achieve. Neutralization of Argentinian CVA and SSK would greatly enhance success.

(3) Loss of key combat or sealift units, eg CVS, Canberra or QE2, would preclude the operation.

(4) Increased if Comodoro Rivadavia, Rio Gallegos and Rio Grande airfields could be denied to the Argentines.

CONSPolitical:

International (and domestic) support could be undermined if casualties are heavy.

Military stalemate could ensue.

Military:

Achievement of objective could be delayed by need to minimise civilian casualties and damage to infrastructure.

Likely to involve direct confrontation possibly with heavy casualties and battle damage.

OPTION 10

1. OPTION - Mining mainland Argentine ports.
2. FORCES REQUIRED/AVAILABLE - SSK, Hercules, Vulcan.
3. TIMING - Most assets immediately available, but SSK could take up to one month. Timing for air delivery depends on the results of trials now being conducted.

PROSPolitical:

Likely to lead to severe disruption of trade.

CONSPolitical:

Difficult to present internationally; relevance to Article 51 unclear; indiscriminate effect; mining of neutral merchantmen likely to alienate international support, undermine domestic support, jeopardise safety of British business community in Argentine.

Military:

Would entail dispersing UK naval capability; air laying likely to be opposed, difficult and costly of assets.

Feasibility: At detriment to other tasks assets could be made available for mining tasks. Uncertain and indiscriminate results and high risk currently make this an unattractive option.

OPTION 11

1. OPTION - Blockading the mainland Argentine ports.
2. FORCES REQUIRED/AVAILABLE - SSN/SSK; scuttle block ships.
3. TIMING - SSN immediatley available; SSK within a month; scuttle block ships in longer term.

PROSPolitical:

Increases economic pressure.

Some port closures might be achieved for a limited period.

Military:

Could reduce the effectiveness of the Argentine Navy.

Feasibility: Partial blockade is feasible but at detriment to other tasks; might be necessary if Argentine naval units retire into mainland harbour.

CONSPolitical:

Increased motive for Soviet involvement because of disruption to grain supplies.

Difficult to present internationally; likely to generate international resentment.

Slow to achieve real effect.

Military:

Scuttle ships only effective in narrow channels and very difficult to place in position.

High risk to personnel of block ships.

OPTION 12

1. OPTION - Attack selected Argentine mainland targets.
2. FORCES REQUIRED/AVAILABLE - Vulcan and/or Special Forces.
3. TIMING - Vulcans - Available at Ascension Island [29 April 1982.] Special Forces Embarked on Task Force and Amphibious Landing Force. An air insertion option is also available.

PROS.Military:

Surprise might be achieved.

Bombing of airfields would reduce effectiveness of Argentine air force.

Special forces operations could be carefully controlled.

Could reduce effectiveness of Argentine Navy.

CONSPolitical:

Severe repercussions internationally for the bombing option. However for special forces option, depending on the collateral damage and casualties, the repercussions could be less.

Difficult to justify attacks on military facilities not operating in support of Argentine effort.

Legitimacy might be challenged in context of Article 51 of UN charter.

International and domestic support for HMG could be severely affected.

Direct incentive for reprisals against British ex-patriates in Argentina.

Military:

Only a limited capability for air attack in view of range and AAR support needed.

Insertion and extraction of special forces would be difficult and could put at risk the delivery vehicles.

OPTION 12 (Continued)

Military:(Continued)

Could give rise to some civilian casualties.

Action might generate active military support for Argentine. British forces could be greatly outnumbered.

High risks to our own forces are involved.

- Feasibility:
- (1) Feasible now.
 - (2) The scale of bombing raids would be limited by need to provide AAR.
 - (3) Surprise would be a key element of success.

OPTION 13

1. OPTION - Landing in Southern Argentina (Tierra del Fuego).
2. FORCES REQUIRED/AVAILABLE - Task Force and Amphibious Landing Force as deployed.
3. TIMING - From end May at the earliest.

PROSCONSPolitical:

Severe blow for junta.

Might provide bargaining counter for withdrawal of Argentine forces from Falkland Islands.

Would be positive measure of HMG resolve.

Military:

Demonstrates capability to extend conflict.

Political:

Severe repercussions internationally and domestically.

Legitimacy under Article 51 of UN Charter would be challenged.

Any Chilean involvement would widen scope of conflict.

Likely to increase Argentinian resistance.

Military:

Very high risk involved.

Would greatly reduce capacity for subsequent operations against Argentine Forces on Falkland Islands, which is UK aim.

TEZ could not be maintained in parallel.

Feasibility: (1) This option could only be achieved with either the full co-operation of the Chilean Air Force on use of appropriate Chilean airfields.

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