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## THE FUTURE BRITISH GARRISON IN THE FALKLAND ISLANDS

- 1. Thank you very much for showing me a copy of your paper on the future British garrison in the Falkland Islands. I am in sympathy with what the paper is trying to achieve; but only wonder whether it is possible to come to any firm conclusions at this stage, when there are so many uncertainties.
- 2. Initially, the forces involved in repossessing the Islands will be perfectly adequate to provide the garrison and we should gradually be able to effect reductions. The extent of these will, of course, depend on two main factors. The first obviously is the residual threat which in turn will depend on the permanent attrition suffered by the Argentine forces, the future of the Junta and the extent of their determination to remain in permanent confrontation with us and try to re-occupy the Islands yet again. The second main factor will be the extent to which we may want to get, or will have succeeded in getting, international involvement in a permanent political settlement for the Islands.
- 3. Clearly we will have to aim at producing an adequate deterrent to any further Argentinian aggression, but for how long this will be needed and what its minimum size should be is difficult to assess at this stage. In Belize we have a force which does have a certain deterrent value and provides a foundation upon which we can build. However we have never regarded this as a force strong enough, without reinforcement, to guarantee the security of that country if it should be attacked. A similar philosophy in the Falkland Islands, given the distances involved and the historical obsession of the Argentinians with the Islands, may well require a significantly higher force level, say a Brigade Group plus, including artillery, surveillance resources and anti-aircraft weapons. I would agree with CNS that we would be unwise to plan on anything less than the worst case.
- 4. One of my principle concerns is that the size of a permanent garrison which is likely to deter the Argentinians if they have remained at a permanent state of conformation with us, may be too large for us to sistein on a lasting basis, because of the major difficulties which it will create in the belone of our defence policy as a whole. While, on the other hand, reduction to a level which is sustainable is only likely to be adequate if a lasting political settlement can be introduced quickly through

the United Nations or some other mediation force. I think Ministers should be made aware of this problem.

5. The important thing now is for further planning to be carried out by VODS(P&L)/AODS(Pol), based on the worst case, taking full account of intelligence assessments, and with full staffing and consultation through the Service Departments.

19 May 1982

CGS

Decition day was in.

waswurken Haloi