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OPERATION "CORPORATE": DAILY SUMMARY No 50 - 26 May 1982

Bad weather in the TEEZ resulted in no enemy air attacks on the Amphibious Operations Area. Diplomatic activity was at a high level however.

POLITICAL AND BACKGROUND

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MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

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1. Security Council Resolution 505. The Irish draft, as amended by non-aligned nations and the UK, was adopted unanimously. The Secretary-General is requested to renew his mission of good offices, bearing in mind SCR 502, to enter into contact immediately with the conflicting parties, who are urged to co-operate with the SG to negotiate acceptable terms for a ceasefire and to submit an interim report to the Security Council as soon as possible and not later than seven days after adoption of the Resolution. HBMA promised to co-operate but stated that the only acceptable conditions for ceasefire are unequivocally linked with immediate commencement of Argentine withdrawal - "The history of the last two months has done nothing to create confidence in the Government of Argentina". Subsequently, the Secretary-General formally asked for a reply within 24 hours to the two Governments' definition of acceptable terms for a ceasefire (26126, 26127, 26128).

2. HBMA is not hopeful of our chances of avoiding another Council Meeting within the next two or three days. The Secretary General will not allow himself to be used as a vehicle for buying time and if there is no shift in either UK or Argentine positions within the next day he will make an early report of failure to the Council. The result could well be a simple cease-fire Resolution which we would have to veto. We would be isolated. (FCO SITREP 27/5).

3. Organisation of American States. There have been approaches to a number of OAS countries in anticipation of the meeting later in the week. Trinidad will not change from the position adopted at the last meeting; Dominican Republic will urge that the OAS resorts to no action until the UN Secretary-General has completed negotiations, falling back on argument that sanctions should not be mandatory and finally abstaining on any resolution which calls for sanctions or other punitive measures - which it will in any case not support against either the UK or USA (26062, 26130).

4. Mexico. In consequence of a request from HBMA, the Prime Minister sent a personal message to President Lopez Portilla, expressing HMG's appreciation of Mexico's contributions in the crisis and explaining that we have no quarrel with the people of Argentina or other Latin American states - "It is in all our interests that Argentine attempts to widen the scope of the dispute should not be allowed to succeed". (26079). This message was intended to fortify Mexico to stand firm against OAS pressure and to give the lead to the smaller moderate Latin American countries (26003). The Mexican Acting Foreign Minister and Deputy Foreign Minister later expressed extreme concern to HBMA - there was increasing pressure for some form of action and the political map was changing when countries such as Cuba and Nicaragua came to the aid of Argentina. The Foreign Minister sought immediate reassurance that HMG wished to link an immediate ceasefire to immediate withdrawal and not a ceasefire only when withdrawal was complete, such reassurance to be given before the OAS Meeting (26131).

5. Peru. HBMA Lima met the Peruvian MFA, who had previously been reported as stating that the blockade of the River Plate (see below, para 11) was "an aggression against the American continent". (26071). The Minister said that he was concerned about the outcome of the OAS Meeting, which "could provoke the usual histrionics and might result in some ill-conceived initiatives", and left the impression that the best line would be to support the initiatives being taken within the UN Security Council framework.

Questioned as to the occasional failure in communications between himself and the President of Peru, the MFA said that he was unaware of this (26105). The US Ambassador subsequently told HEMA that he had seen a draft OAS resolution referring to the Punta Arenas helicopter incident as an instance of the extension of the conflict to the Argentine mainland (26108).

6. Bolivia tried to take a balanced view but did support the Argentine case: the MFA was under considerable pressure from the military to take a stronger line, and attempts had been made to have the Minister removed from office. The Government would prefer not to issue any statements and did not want the OAS/Rio Treaty meeting which could only inflame matters. HEMA stated that he realised that the crisis was having an economically and politically destabilising effect on Bolivia, whose self-interest would accordingly be best served by the immediate retaking of the islands. (26090).

7. Non-Aligned Movement. The NAM Co-ordinating Bureau is expected to deal with the Falklands as the second major item on the agenda, after consideration of the September 1982 Summit Site: at present, this is scheduled to be in Baghdad but if security considerations rule this out then India is said to be ready to propose that Cuba should continue to hold the chairmanship for a further year: HEMA has obtained a copy of the preliminary draft of the final communique - the Latin American section has been left blank and will be filled at the last minute. Eighty-six of the 96 members of the NAM have accepted the invitation to attend (26101).

8. Ambassadors have been lobbying NAM members. The Iraqi Deputy Premier promised that his country would take a balanced view of the issue as Argentina with its notorious links with Israel and South Africa, is no friend. On the other hand, as "President-elect" of the NAM, Iraq could not side too heavily with the UK - it was hoped that problem would have gone away by September (26047).

9. The Malaysian Foreign Minister spoke robustly in private, making no secret of his personal wish that the UK obtains an early and complete success: the High Commissioner has no hopes that this will be expressed publicly but believes that there is a fair chance of Malaysia refraining from criticism of HMG's policy unless such criticism becomes very general at the NAM meeting (26096).

10. The Senegalese MFA has assured HEMA Dakar that he will do his best to achieve a satisfactory outcome which will not prejudice the British position. He would like to know of our Commonwealth backers in order to co-ordinate tactics at Havana (26103).

11. River Plate. Argentina, Nicaragua, Panama and Venezuela communicated a formal protest to the Security Council, alleging a UK decision to extend Naval and air action into the estuary of the Plate (26012). HEMA exercised his right of reply and pointed out that no operations were intended to the west of the line Punta del Este (Uruguay) and Punta Rasa de Cabo San Antonio (Argentina) these being the limits of the 1973 Plate Treaty (26013). The Uruguayan Government was quickly reassured (26048) and the Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs expressed his considerable satisfaction (26094), but other nations, including the USA (26004), Peru (26071) and Brazil (26049) also required details of the British intentions.

14. Europe. Chancellor Schmidt told the SPD Parliamentary Party that "Solidarity with Britain as an ally gave the Federal Government the opportunity and perhaps also the moral duty ... to join with other parties in exerting an influence on Britain".

A press commentator close to the Chancellor states that German support is grudging and full of reservation stemming from incomprehension at many aspects of the Prime Minister's Falklands strategy - Germany will not go through thick and thin with Britain, despite or even because of Berlin, where the UK is a Protecting Power (26112).

15. The EEC Commissioners are uncertain how to prevent Argentine exports from entering via Italy and Ireland as there is no precedent for the situation. The preliminary view is that the job must be left to national Customs services: the Commission has been reminded of the need to satisfy itself that national authorities have legal authority for unilateral action to exclude Argentine material entering from Ireland or Italy. (26089).

16. A public opinion poll in Switzerland (by Zurich "Tages Anzeiger") indicates that 59% of Swiss believe that the Falklands belong to Britain and that only 5% support the Argentine occupation, although 26% believed Argentine claim of sovereignty. (26069).

ARGENTINE ARMS PROCUREMENT

17. It is now known that there is a daily flight by a Peruvian civil C130 Hercules to Buenos Aires, carrying military spares and equipment from Israeli sources (COS Mtg 60). Israel continues to deny military sales to Argentina, claiming that Kfir aircraft are being supplied to Ecuador under an existing contract and that it has no way of knowing what secret arrangements exist between Argentina and Ecuador (26034).

18. On 25 May, the Chief of the Peruvian Armed Forces Joint Council reiterated that the Armed Forces were ready to provide military assistance to Argentina whenever a political decision was reached but he ridiculed Bolivian reports that there had already been military overflights. A Press report in a secret session of the Peruvian Senate held to debate military assistance under the Rio Treaty alleged that some speakers suggested that Peru could act as a channel for Soviet military assistance (26091).

19. Colonel Ali Fituri, calling on the FCO, denied Libyan arms deliveries to Argentina: he had been authorised by Auadhati to say that Libya had no intention of interfering in the Falklands dispute and that the People's Bureau's call for sanctions did not correctly represent the views of the Libyan leadership. (26106).

20. The Luxembourg Government is using all its efforts to stop Cargolux freight flights carrying arms to Argentina but it will be difficult to prevent flights between third-party countries (26030).

OPERATIONS

21. The only enemy air attack appears to have been by a pair of Mirages which unloaded their bombs through cloud behind 2 Para, advancing towards Darwin (26132). Bad weather in the AOA prevented attacks on the AOA or Battl. Group which operated some 80 nm east of Stanley, providing CAP and ground support. One Harrier GR 3 successfully attacked a command post and installations in the Port Harvard area and a Puma was destroyed on the ground after the Harrier responsible had evaded a Blowpipe missile. Another Harrier lofted two 1000 lb bombs against Port Stanley Airfield installations - stron-

radar locks were detected but no AA fire was experienced. The airfield area had previously been bombarded by GLAMORGAN during the night of 25/26 May (26078, 26063, Duty Cdr).

22. Operations Ashore. Three LVTP and 80 enemy troops were seen in the Big Island area and "neutralised by artillery". There were no land engagements but 2 Para began an advance on Darwin/Goose Green before last light (26132).

23. The 1,600 ft Harrier airstrip is expected to be completed, with an Emergency Fuel Handling Equipment (EFHE) installation, comprising two dracons and pumps on 27 May. Another EFHE unit and six 45 cu.m tanks were among stores lost onboard the ATLANTIC CONVEYOR (Landing Force Sitrep, 26132, 26052).

MOVEMENTS AND REINFORCEMENTS

24. The BRISTOL Group, except for CARDIFF - lagging after an air-drop - had joined TG 317.8 by 0800Z. ARROW entered the AOA to anchor in San Carlos water after first aid repairs by the STENA SEASPREAD team (Duty Cdr, 26090).

25. ANTRIM, CANBERRA and NORLAND detached to rendezvous with the QUEEN ELIZABETH II: ANTRIM will collect CLFFI at 271200Z, the STUFF and, later, STROMNESS will transfer troops and stores (26009, 26078).

26. The Prime Minister has personally expressed her gratitude for the New Zealand offer of HMNZS CANTERBURY, which will replace an HM Ship on Indian Ocean patrol duties (26093).

27. Reactivation of four Standby Squadron frigates (TARTAR, GURKHA, ZULU, and BERWICK) has been approved and Dockyard work will have Operation CORPORATE priority (26040).

28. A new TF 317 organisation comes into effect at 280001Z.

29. The unregistered ship sighted near Ascension has been identified as the Maltese IRENE IDEAL, whose new owner has frequently been fined for not supplying information to the Register of companies (26028).

MATERIAL

30. The ATLANTIC CONVEYOR appears to have been hit by only one Exocet. She was in 5024S 5300W at 251500Z, floating upright with normal draught, although extensively damaged. It is estimated that three Chinooks, six Wessex 5 and a Lynx were destroyed. Equipment earmarked to replace losses includes full support equipment for six Chinooks, 280 Cluster Bomb units, three Chinooks and four complete tented camps with accommodation and cooking and lighting facilities for 4,500 men (26132, 26052).

31. The shortage of Seacat missiles is causing concern, with some ships expending up to 30% of their outfit daily (Duty Cdr) and MOD has called for reports of weapons and ammunition expenditure to plan resupply and procurement, and to justify expenditure. Action has been taken to increase the maximum practicable short term production of Sea Wolf and alternative sources of Seacat are being pursued in addition to increased production (26039). 72 Seacats are to be embarked in BAYLEAF and, subject to MOD approval, 44 in TOR CALEDONIA (26082).

32. DST(AS) is to report the number of 20mm and 40/60 guns, mountings and the quantity of ammunition available. DNAP has been requested to assess the requirement for fitting in order to make best use of small number of light AA guns available in this country (BSC 58).

33. OPDEFs are listed in the Duty Cdr's brief. ARGONAUT still has an UXB in the Seacat magazine. BRILLIANT has jury-rigged her forward Seawolf launcher and CAAIS (Duty Cdr).

34. The request for 50 limpet mines is stalled at the US Secretary of Defence's level. It is highly probable that the BritNavAtt, Washington, will be asked to make out the operational case for supply of these items, over which there is political concern that they may be used against ships in mainland ports (26053).

STUFF AND LOGISTICS

35. An Ammunition ship is required to carry 100 Seacat, 3,500 rounds of 4.5in (Mks 6 and 8), 20,00 x 20mm, 2,500 x 40mm, 400 x 3in Chaff R/P, 260 CBU and 16,000 x 30mm Aden (26082).

36. The AVALONA STAR is to be fitted, in a similar manner to SAXONIA with more winches and accommodation, from 31 May subject to survey (BSC 58).

37. TOR CALEDONIA and CONTENDER BEZANT were requested to report on spare capacity on and below deck with any known constraints, including any on the carriage of explosives (26081). CONTENDER BEZANT can provide 50sq ft if Mexeflote is available in the forward area to unload from the forward ramp (26120).

38. The AM2 matting at Yorktown is to be loaded in the CEDAR BANK, which will arrive on 1 Jun (26080).

39. Rapier spares are to be air-dropped to MINERVA within the TEZ (26078).

40. PLUMLEAF is repairing stern damage to her RAS rig, 1,000nm to the north east of the TEZ.

41. The tug CYCLONE's survey at Gibraltar has revealed a less than satisfactory material state, the state of her internal and exposed deck plates being of particular concern - major renewal is needed to provide the degree of confidence in conditions intended, but could operate in sheltered waters following superficial repairs.

PERSONNEL

42. Two hundred and sixty nine survivors from COVENTRY have been identified, twelve of these are wounded and 28 men are not yet accounted for. Two RN and two Merchant Navy personnel are known to have been killed in ATLANTIC CONVEYOR, there are 137 known survivors and eight men are not yet accounted for (26046). The survivors of both ships will be transferred to Ascension-bound ships, probably mainly in BRITISH TAY (26009).

43. CANBERRA has reported an additional death from ARDENT (26064). CANBERRA's casualty admissions and transfers to HYDRA for UGANDA are listed in Serial 26125. Thirty five patients were in her wards on 26 May.

44. HBMA Brasilia has received the text of the Argentine agreement to the use of HECLA to transfer POWs, and casualties via Montevideo (26115). The Argentinians have agreed to ICRC inspection of the BAHIA PARAISO but not to the embarkation of a representative (NSAG 0700).

45. The aid of the ICRC is to be sought in establishing the whereabouts of Flight Lieutenant J W Glover RAF, whose Harrier GR 3 was shot down on 21 May and who has been reported as a POW in the Argentine Press (26044).

46. Report from MV GEEST PORT that owing to shipping losses her working party is registering extreme disquiet over the non payment of allowances which would bring them into line with Merchant Navy personnel (26070).

COMMUNICATIONS

47. The SCOT signal backlog at 260700Z was:

PRIORITY 533 (106 more than 24 hours earlier)

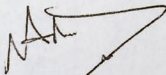
ROUTINE 214

ZDK 128

(VCNS Brief)

MEDIA

48. SIR PERCIVALE reports that the Press is in forward positions with each major unit. All available kit has been issued, although there are shortages among the troops, and more correspondents cannot yet be equipped to survive in the field. The rest of the Press will go ashore with 5 Inf Bde and will be equipped as soon as possible (26124).



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