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DP 12/82
26 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and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and have differentiated between those options already implemented or superseded and those available for future consideration.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 continue to remain a key factor in sustaining the land and sea operations. ILLUSTRIOUS is being brought forward to replace HERMES and INVINCIBLE in August. Provision of a suitable merchant ship for additional helicopter support, thereby relieving fixed wing deck space in ILLUSTRIOUS is under investigation.
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 54th Meeting/82.
2. Attachment to COS(Misc) 223/742/1 dated 19 May 1982.

MILITARY OPTIONS - OPERATION CORPORATE

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

At Appendix 1 - Options in Hand or Superseded:

- 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
- 6: Landing with limited aim of establishing a secure military presence on part of the Falkland islands without attempting to evict Argentines
- 7: Landing with aim of full and rapid repossession of the Falkland islands
- 8: Landing Southern Argentina (Tierra del Fuego).

At Appendix 2 - Future Options:

- Option 9: Repossession of South Sandwich
- 10: Prolonged cutting of Argentine lines of communication to the Falkland Islands
- 11: Mining mainland Argentine ports
- 12: Blockading mainland Argentine ports

- 13: Attack selected Argentine mainland targets
- 14: Increased military cooperation with Chile
(including possibility of formal military alliance)

Appendices:

1. Options in Hand or Superseded.
2. Future Options.

OPTION 1

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

PROSPolitical:

Low cost.

Counter to false Argentine PR claims

Military:

Confuses enemy's Command and weakens morale.

CONSPolitical:

Might call into question UK integrity.

May require further media manipulation with risk of further strained relationships.

Military:

Effectiveness limited and difficult to assess.

Supportive of other measures; not a decisive measure in itself.

OPTION 2

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

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 - In effect now.

PROS

CONS

Military:

Neutralisation of Stanley Airfield has an enhanced impact on the TEZ to deny effective aerial resupply. Selective attacks to weaken the Garrison capability and resolve. Discriminate attacks on military positions eg Airfields/Airstrips; Radar/POL/ammunition sites to reduce Argentine capability.

Political:

Some risk of civilian casualties and damage to infrastructure.

OPTION 4

1. OPTION - Extension of operations against Argentine garrison by Special Forces/Commando raids.
2. FORCES REQUIRED/AVAILABLE - SAS/SBS/Commando forces.
3. TIMING - In effect now.

PROSPolitical:

Successful attacks on high value targets are essential part of repossessing the islands.

Reduces risk to population from general combat

Military:

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

Confusing command and eroding the will to defend.

CONSPolitical:

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

Could lead to reprisals against civil population in Falkland Islands.

Military:

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

Risk of attrition to own 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 - Now in operation with imposed constraints.

PROS

Political:

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 ease maintenance of TEZ and support of land forces ashore.

Lessens subsequent risk to UK assets.

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

Constraints: (1) Warning necessary prior to attack against Argentine 707 surveillance aircraft.

- (2) Twenty four hours notice required by Ministers prior to attacks in areas within 200 nm limits claimed by Uruguay, Brazil and Chile.

CONS

Political:

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 or less than 12 nm from the Argentine coast.

May conflict with requirement to enforce TEZ.

Increased risk of attrition to own forces.

OPTION 6

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:- Now superseded.

PROS

Political:

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 OVA and SSK would be high priority.
- (4) Loss of key combat or sealift units might preclude the operation.
- (5) Increased if Comodoro Rivadavia, Rio Gallegos and Rio Grande airfields could be denied to the Argentinians.

CONS

Political:

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 7

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 31 May/1 June.
3. TIMING - In effect now.

PROSCONSPolitical:

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.

Political:

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.

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) Ability to maintain air and maritime superiority over potentially lengthy period is subject to relative Argentine/UK losses. Neutralisation of Argentine CVA and SSK remain a high priority.

(3) Loss of CVS or QE2 would prejudice or even preclude achieving the aim.

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

OPTION 8

1. OPTION - Landing in Southern Argentina (Tierra del Fuego).
2. FORCES REQUIRED/AVAILABLE - Task Force and Amphibious Landing Force as deployed.
3. TIMING - Now superseded by committal of forces to Option 7.

PROSPolitical:

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.

CONSPolitical:

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.

OPTION 9

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

PROS

CONS

Political:

Might have some relevance to UK stake in Antarctica.

Remove from Argentina a useful bargaining point in the event of diplomatic solution.

Commensurate with maintaining diplomatic and military pressure on Argentina.

Military:

Small scale operation.

Political:

Looks like a soft option.

Exerts virtually no pressure on Argentina to withdraw troops from Falkland Islands.

Military:

Diverts forces from higher priority tasks.

Supportive of other measures; not a decisive measure in itself.

Virtually impossible to garrison.

Weather conditions could abort operation.

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

OPTION 10

1. OPTION - Prolonged cutting of Argentine lines of communication to Falkland Islands - "Blockade" following reoccupation of part of the island by own forces.
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 - As required.

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.

Prevent Argentine reoccupation or reinforcement by sea.

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 may be required in the event of a military stalemate on land or Argentine reluctance to admit defeat following successful retaking of East Falkland by our own forces. However the air EZ cannot be sustained over a prolonged period without the

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 and air assets could prejudice effective enforcement of blockade. Additional maritime forces may be required to replace current losses.

Risk of key loss, eg. to an aircraft carrier, major troopship, or RFA which could severely impede our aim.

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OPTION 10 (Continued)

eventual replacement on station of HERMES and INVINCIBLE. In this context action is in hand to bring forward ILLUSTRIOUS for deployment in August. Provision of a suitable merchant ship for additional helicopter support to relieve deck space in ILLUSTRIOUS for fixed wing operations is under investigation. In any event, it will be necessary to deploy additional Harrier GR3 aircraft to the Falklands area.

OPTION 11

1. OPTION - Mining mainland Argentine ports.
2. FORCES REQUIRED/AVAILABLE - SSK, Hercules, Vulcan.
3. TIMING - 30 M Mark V mines (sufficient for 2 loads) prepared at Milford Haven for laying by SSK. Passage time one month from UK unless ONYX diverted which could give shorter timing. Hercules has now successfully air-delivered mines. Timing is dependent on assessment of the sea-bed dispersal pattern achieved in the trials.

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 12

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

PROS

CONS

Political:

Increases economic pressure.

Some port closures might be achieved for a limited period.

Military:

Could reduce the effectiveness of the Argentine Navy.

Political:

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.

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

OPTION 13

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

PROSMilitary:

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.

UK ability to strike from long range will have an impact on sense of domestic security within Argentina. Likely to tie down air defence remote from area of conflict.

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.

SECTION 13 (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.

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R. Atwell
13 Sept 2012