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TOP SECRET  
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OP SUTTON

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TOP SECRET

(36)

1. FOR CINC FROM CLF. NOW THAT WE HAVE REACHED A SIEGE SIT AROUND PORT STANLEY THE RIGHT PSYCHOLOGICAL MOMENT MAY SOON ARISE TO ACHIEVE A NEGOTIATED SURRENDER OF THE ARGENTINE FORCES IN THE FALKLAND ISLANDS. AS ANY MEASURES TAKEN HERE TO ACHIEVE THIS WILL NEED CLOSE COORDINATION WITH DIPLOMATIC PRESSURE BEING APPLIED ELSEWHERE AND POSSIBLY OTHER SUPPORT FROM UK I HAVE SET OUT MY THOUGHTS SO THAT WE KEEP IN STEP.

2. OUR EXPERIENCE TO DATE SUGGESTS THAT THE ENEMY WILL FIGHT HARD ENOUGH UNTIL HIS 'MILITARY HONOUR' IS SATISFIED AND THEN SURRENDER WILLINGLY. THIS MAY NOT BE THE CASE IN STANLEY BUT ASSUMING THAT IT WILL BE THIS PRESENTS ME WITH FOUR QUESTIONS:

A. WHAT WILL HE REGARD AS THE SATISFACTION OF HIS MILITARY HONOUR AND HOW DO I RECOGNISE WHEN THIS POINT HAS BEEN REACHED?

B. HOW DO WE ESTABLISH COMMUNICATIONS WITH HIM TO START NEGOTIATING A SURRENDER?

C. WHAT SHOULD THE NEGOTIATING PROCEDURE BE AND WHAT PSYCHOLOGICAL LINE SHOULD BE TAKEN?

D. WILL HE BE PREPARED TO SURRENDER WEST FALKLAND AS WELL AS STANLEY? IF NOT IS THE SURRENDER OF STANLEY A SUFFICIENT PRIZE IN ITSELF TO BE WORTH TAKING?

3. IDENTIFICATION OF MOMENT WHEN HONOUR IS SATISFIED MUST BE A MATTER OF JUDGEMENT BASED ON OVERALL STRENGTH OF ENEMY ON THE ISLANDS AND MAINLAND, KNOWLEDGE OF HIS COMMANDERS CHARACTERISTICS AND FEED BACK FROM ANY CONTACT ALREADY ESTABLISHED. ADVICE HERE FROM THOSE WITH PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE OF HOSTAGE SITUATIONS ELSEWHERE AND OF DEALING WITH ARGENTINIANS IS THAT NOW IS NOT TOO SOON TO START TRYING TO ESTABLISH INITIAL CONTACTS.

4. IMPLICIT IN ANY ATTEMPT TO NEGOTIATE SURRENDER IS THE FACT THAT TO AVOID UNECESSARY BLOODSHED, AND ALSO TO GIVE ENEMY CHANCE TO SURRENDER BEFORE HE PERCEIVES ALL HIS HONOUR IS LOST, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO IMPOSE A HALT IN THE MAIN BATTLE. LOCAL TACTICAL DISADVANTAGES OF THIS WOULD CLEARLY BE ACCEPTABLE IF THERE WAS REAL PROSPECT OF OBTAINING A SURRENDER BUT I SEE THAT THERE COULD BE POLITICAL SENSITIVITIES AT HOME TO FURTHER DELAY OR APPARENT SOFTNESS AND I WOULD NEED YOUR STEER ON THIS.

5. FOR NEGOTIATIONS I PROPOSE TO ESTABLISH A SMALL TEAM INCLUDING BRIG J WATERS, LT COL ROSE 22 SAS, CAPTAIN BELL RM TO TREAT ON OUR BEHALF. IT WILL BE IMPORTANT TO ENSURE THAT INITIAL STEPS ARE MADE LOW KEY WITHOUT ANY IMPLICIT THREAT, RATHER STRESSING INDUCEMENTS WHICH APPEAL TO HONOURABLE, REASONABLE CIVILISED FIGHTING MEN WHO HAVE DONE WELL UNDER VERY UNFAVOURABLE CONDITIONS AND THEN GRADUALLY WORK UP TO PRESENTING SITUATION WHICH SHOWS THAT IT IS IN THE INTERESTS OF THE ARGENTINE ARMY ITSELF TO SURRENDER. THIS WOULD SHOW THAT DUE TO CIRCUMSTANCES BEYOND HIS CONTROL - THE BRITISH BLOCKADE, THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GROUND TO AIR MISSILES IN DESTROYING THE ENEMY AIR FORCE, THE WEATHER ETC - IT IS INEVITABLE THAT GEN MENENDEZ WILL BE DEFEATED IN THE END. THE DESTRUCTION OF THE ARGENTINE ARMY IN PORT STANLEY CANNOT BE IN THE INTERESTS OF ARGENTINA OR THE FREE WORLD. THIS DEVELOPING LINE WOULD REQUIRE SYNCHRONISATION WITH SAME MESSAGE THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS AND ALL SHOULD DEVELOPE LINE THAT SURRENDER WOULD BE WITH HONOUR. BAIT TO ACHIEVE INITIAL CONTACT BETWEEN NEGOTIATORS STILL BEING EXAMINED HERE. POSSIBILITIES INCLUDE OFFERS FOR SENIOR OFFERS OF MENENDEZ STAFF TO INSPECT THEIR WOUNDED, OR PW, OR POSSIBLE NEGOTIATED EVACUATION OF CIVILIANS FROM PORT STANLEY.

7. THE QUESTION OF ACCEPTING A PART SURRENDER OR HOLDING OUT FOR ALL THE ISLANDS WILL HAVE A POLITICAL DIMENSION ON WHICH I WILL NEED YOUR ADVICE. HOWEVER AS STANLEY IS MAIN CENTRE OF EN RESISTENCE MY INITIAL THOUGHTS ARE THAT THE REASONS FOR REJECTING SUCH A TACTICAL PRIZE ON ITS OWN WOULD NEED TO BE VERY COMPELLING.

8. YOU WILL SEE THAT MY THOUGHTS HERE DEAL SOLELY WITH GETTING TO THE POINT AT WHICH A SURRENDER IS OFFERED AND JUDGED BY US TO BE ACCEPTABLE. THE ACTUAL MECHANICS OF THE SURRENDER - WHERE, HOW, WHO TO - ARE A DIFFERENT MATTER. AT THIS STAGE SUGGEST THAT THEY ARE ONLY RELEVANT IN SO FAR AS WE SHOULD BE ON OUR GUARD AGAINST CONSIDERING A 'FORM OF CEREMONY' WHICH WOULD PUT A SURRENDER WITH HONOUR OUT OF REACH.

9. IF ALL SENT WELL WE COULD REACH THIS POINT AS EARLY AS 9/10 JUN

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TOP SECRET REGISTRY

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