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TOP SECRETIVE REVIEW
BY
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DIVISION/DIRECTORATE/BRANCH: CAS			
RELEVANT REGISTERED FILE			
DATE OPENED: 18 MAR 86			
SUBJECT: CO-OPERATION WITH CHILE			
Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date
AIR 20/13036			
AIR 20/13036			

No.



NOTES

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TOP SECRET SENSITIVE REVIEW
CLASSIFIED BY: [unclear]
DATE: 22/11/86
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85. Details of the total aeromedical lift are as follows:

	<u>Flights</u>	<u>Stretcher</u>	<u>Walking</u>
April	8	9	11
May	14	21	27
June	22	152	326
July	11	55	84
Total	<u>55</u>	<u>237</u>	<u>448</u>

PREPARATIONS FOR SPECIAL FORCES OPERATIONS

86. Before CTF 317 formally stated his requirements for the use of airborne Special Forces (SF) in Operation CORPORATE, the SF Flt (34) of No. [redacted] Sqn, RAF Lyneham, had begun examining and practising various operating options with members of the SAS. As early as 9 Apr, 4 SF crews flew in 2 aircraft to Colerne airfield (35), where they spent the day discussing various possibilities for infiltrating a party of SAS troops and vehicles into an airfield. The feasibility of such an exercise had been demonstrated in Mar when an SF crew had successfully infiltrated an SAS team into RAF Laarbruch during the station's TACEVAL exercise. Events moved rapidly on and the work-up phase for such an operation called Exercise PURPLE DRAGON, commenced on the 10 Apr.

Sqn F540 Apr

(34) The flt consists of 5 crews, commanded by a sqn, and regularly exercises with SAS and SBS Sections.

(35) Formerly RAF Colerne, situated to the east of Bath.

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x 87. MODUK(Air) allocated 2 Hercules ac to the SF Flt for the period 10 to 13 Apr and also detailed HQSTC to make available Kinloss and Marham for the exercise. At dawn on 11 Apr, Easter Sunday, 2 blacked-out Hercules landed at an unsuspecting RAF Kinloss. The 2 aircraft had approached the airfield in formation at low-level and landed simultaneously some 2,000 feet apart. The aircraft stopped at specific points on the runway and discharged their loads of troops and vehicles, and departed. This was the first full rehearsal of the Exercise PURPLE DRAGON plan. Similar rehearsals, to practise stream landings and rapid offloads, were held at RAF Marham on the night 11/12 Apr, RAF Kinloss, again, on the night 12/13 Apr and RAF Binbrook on the 29 Apr.

100020Z Apr
38G/1800/172/9
Cont.1 E7
Sqn F540 Apr

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SECTION 3(4)

x 88. To increase the speed of the off-load, RAF Lyneham Engineering Wing made some modifications to aircraft equipment and the crews developed new techniques, these included: *including:*

a. Modifications to the aircraft's cargo ramp with the hydraulic restrictors removed for rapid operation.

b. Special toe ramps which remained attached to the ramp even when lowered at speeds of 20 to 30 knots.

x ~~c. Landing with the rear cargo door already open.~~

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The crews were also to develop new techniques such as landing with the rear cargo door open

Another option practised was that of parachute insertion, a much more familiar and tested technique. Nevertheless, crews still carried out a work-up, which included flights at 150 feet over the sea at night, simulating a run-in below radar cover to a pin-point coastal feature, climbing to the Dropping Zone (DZ) using the terrain for maximum radar cover for the drop and then making a clandestine departure using similar techniques.

89. On 13 Apr, Exercise GREY MIST involved a crew working with experts from RAE Farnborough and safety equipment workers to fit ANVIS equipment to helmets for the SF pilots and co-pilots. Special aircraft instrument lighting required for use with the goggles was fitted to aircraft XV196. By the early morning of 14 Apr, the crew had operated successfully at 250 feet over sea and land, and had carried out roller landings using ANVIS. Six months of peacetime work had been compressed into one hectic day! Over the next 10 days, each of the other 3 crews involved in the work-up exercises flew sorties using ANVIS. Later in the month 2 crews practised close formation flying in preparation for AAR operations.



Sqn F540 Apr

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90. Meanwhile CTF 317 had indicated a requirement for SF to be inserted covertly into the Falkland Islands in order to obtain intelligence on Argentinian military dispositions prior to a naval or military intervention by British forces. DSAS had been considering possible methods of infiltrating an element of the SAS. One option would be a paradrop of SAS troops and by 18 Apr HQ 38 Gp had produced a plan for such an operation.

38G/8208/12/1/TS
18 Apr
TF38.1 E16

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91. There were 2 options for mounting the operation with a Hercules C Mk 1 aircraft. The use of an airfield in Antarctica was considered but, on advice from the New Zealand High Commission that weather conditions in the Antarctic winter precluded safe trans-polar flight. The option had to be discounted. Mounting the operation from, and recovering to a Chilean airfield had also to be discounted on political grounds.

38G/8208/12/1/TS
dated 18 Apr
TF38.1 E16

92. To mount the operation from Ascension it would be necessary to increase the range of the aircraft and as a result of a MODUK(Air) initiative, RAF Lyneham fitted additional fuel tanks inside a Hercules fuselage (36). Even so the increased fuel capacity was insufficient to enable the operation to be mounted from, and recover to Ascension.

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93. On 21 Apr, the Air Cdr signalled MODUK(Air) indicating that CTF 317 wished to take up the option of an air-launched ST^F operation in the East Falklands. The purposes of the operation would be to provide important recce for follow-up operations against vital points such as radar sites and airfield facilities.

211045Z Apr
TF38.1 E22

The recommended P hour was 240300Z Apr.

(36) Details of the fit are covered later in the chapter.

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x 94. MODUK(Air) replied that the subject was being put to OD(SA) for a political decision and that the P hour time-scale suggested was impracticable. They also advised that all decisions on SF operations were being considered at Central Staffs' level. In response to a CTF 317 suggestion. ACDS(Ops) allocated the proposed operation the codeword 'HEAVEN SENT'. CTF317 issued an Operaton Order 4/82 for Operation 'HEAVEN SENT' on the 29 Apr; this order was based on a draft submitted by HQ38 Gp on 25 Apr.

232023Z Apr
 TF38.1 E36a
 TF38.1 E60
 38G/8208/12/1/TD
 25 Apr
 TF 38.1 E45

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x 96. Whilst there were no direct operational sorties from this first furore of activity, it did achieve some results. Firstly, it established a command and control system for SF operations using fixed-wing aircraft. Initially MOD stipulated that operational control of transport aircraft engaged in SF operations would transfer to the Air Cdr on departure from th UK. This was slightly amended, after

192056 Apr
 TF19.1 E61

agreement by the AOCs 18 and 38 Gps, to give operational control to the Air Cdr when the aircraft reaching the FMB. The planning of the fixed wing air element of SF operations was mainly carried out by HQ 38 Gp and the SAS using well established channels of communication. SASO 38 Gp maintained very close contact with his SF crews and advisors even when, later in the operation, they had been deployed to the FMB and whilst in theory under the control of the Air Cdr. Secondly, the fuore of activity provided the impetus for the development of a long range and AAR capability for the Hercules force, which was to prove vital to the support and resupply of the fleet.

202015Z Apr
38G/1800/172/Cont.4
E60

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97. [REDACTED]

301245Z Apr
38G/1800/172/9/
Cont.2 E104

SASO 38 Gp suggested to the Air Cdr that the 2 aircraft modified for the proposed SF operation could be used for the long range resupply of the fleet. Meanwhile 2 47 Sqn SF crews had began training in the UK for the advent of the AAR Hercules C MK 1P. By 14 May the modified Hercules had received from MODUK PE clearance for AAR operations in support of Operation CORPORATE and one crew was trained in AAR techniques. The aircraft deployed to Ascension Island and arrived at 141915Z May, the AAR trained crew having already positioned at Ascension by VC10.

141425Z May
38G/1800/172 Cont.4
E93
142015Z May
38G/1800/172 Cont.4
E98

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98. Whilst the crews and engineering staff were developing a

X Hercules AAR capability, ~~and in view of~~ the crucial importance

X of reducing shore-based Argentinian aircraft^e effectiveness

X as soon as possible, ~~CTF 317 was considering~~ the feasibility
was prompting CTF 317 to consider

of using SF in a 'Coup de Main' attack against the principal

161630Z May

Argentine tactical air bases at Rio Grande and Rio Gallegos.

18G/335/4/20

The plan was to insert a recce patrol to Rio Grande and,

Ops.1

depending on the recce results, possibly follow up with the

E8

insertion of a main force at either airfield. CTF317 realised

that the operation could well have resulted in the loss of 2

Hercules aircraft. The insertion phase of the operation was

171615Z May

given the codeword "PLUMDUFF" and the attack phase "MIKADO".

18G/335/4/20/Ops.1

E 10

99. The air operation order was issued by the Air Cdr on ~~the~~

191830Z May

19 May. The mission was for 2 Hercules aircraft to airland or

18G/335/4/20/Ops.1

airdrop up to 70 SF personnel and equipment on or close to Rio

E 19

X Grande and/or Rio Gallegos airfields. The operation was to be

mounted from Ascension and involved one probed and tank-fitted

Hercules and one probed Hercules which had deployed to

Ascension on 19 May. The former aircraft would have returned

to Ascension Island, but there was not sufficient tanker

support available to allow simultaneous recovery of the

Hercules to Ascension Island. [REDACTED]

second?

X [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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100. The first crew had already flown the first Hercules AAR 180853Z May
sortie of the operation on 16 May. On this sortie it dropped 18G/3354/20/4/
8 SF troops to RFA FORT AUSTIN who were to form the recce E13
party for operation PLUMDUFF. The flight involved flying to a 141935Z May
point some 3150 nautical miles from Ascension, air-dropping 38G/1800/172/9/
the troops and ^{returning} ^{base} recovering to Ascension. Two Victor K2 Cont.4 E101
aircraft supported the Hercules, passing some 35,000 lbs of
fuel at a range of 1800 nms from Ascension. The drop was
successful and the crew returned to Ascension Island after a
flight lasting 24 hours 05 mins! The Air Cdr recognised this 170335Z May
feat and signalled the crew that the flight of one day and 5 38G/1800/172/9/
minutes in which the AAR capability of the Hercules had been Cont.5 E22
demonstrated operationally for the first time was a 170920Z May
magnificent effort. He added that the RAF had significantly 38G/AOC/16/3 E2
improved its capability to support the fleet.
of the concepts being postulated by the SAS as a result of the
101. To assist with the planning of the operations. HQ 38 Gp 171656Z May
positioned a liaison officer (LO) and an intelligence officer 18G/335/4/20/4/
at Ascension. ^{where they} These officers acted as ^{links} (an interface) between Ops.1 E11
the SAS and ^{the authorities on the island} (Ascension resources). By 18 May there were nearly
70 SAS personnel at Ascension and the need for secrecy was
paramount. On 19 May came news of a delay to the operation
and a remit to re-consider all the options in the extended 191737Z May
time now available. SASO 38 Gp signalled the LO that whilst 18G/335/4/2034/Ops.1
he expected him to maintain a positive approach, he was to E17
continue in talks with the SAS to parade the tactical
arguments 'rehearsed' in SASO's briefing prior to the LO's
departure. ^{essentially} that the LO was not to agree to certain options
without SASO's permission. This order seemed strange when the
detachment were under the Operational Control of the Air Cdr.

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Nevertheless, the order was given quite openly and the SASO finished the message but emphasising that operational control was with the AOC 18 Gp with whom he was in full accord.

102. The lack of positive intelligence about the likely targets was apparently causing some friction, The SAS was suggesting an insertion of a recon party by air-landing, and However, SF 47^{Sqn} detachment considered that the intelligence available was inadequate to support any successful air-land option. The aircrew considered air-landing by heavy aircraft using PNGs was hazardous. The RAF planning team (the LO, intelligence officer and certain members of 47 Sqn SF) recommended an air-drop option as the best method of maintaining a covert posture. SASO 38 Gp was alarmed at some of the concepts being postulated by the SAS as a result of the remit to re-consider the options. The Air Cdr was advised to watch out for over-ambitious schemes and be ready for a short-notice requirement for a Hercules airdrop sortie. The situation became less charged when alternative means of inserting SF were examined but, despite further lengthy examination, MODUK formally cancelled Operation MIKADO on 4 Jun. However, with this cancellation came a request for CTF 317 to produce an outline plan for the SF to destroy the combat effectiveness of Super Etendards, the Rio Grande airfield being the most likely target.

200330Z May
 18G/335/4/20/4/Ops.1
 E22
 Note Peaker/Air Cdr
 210130Z
 18G/335/4/20/4/Ops.1
 E28
 040957Z Jun
 18G/335/4/20/4/Ops.1
 E36

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103. Consequently, CTF 317's staff commenced to work on a plan for Operation IMPI, which, if implemented, would have involved one RAF Hercules. This aircraft would have flown from Ascension Island, refuelled in flight, and then tracked ^e east of the Falkland Islands and south of Cape Horn prior to making a low ^{low level approach below Argentine radar cover for a night landing of} landing of SF at San Jose or Arco Iris airfield. Other SF would have been inserted by sea. In the event, the surrender of the Argentine forces in the Falkland Islands and the cessation of hostile activities by Argentine aircraft resulted in the operation being cancelled.

Ops 1/3 dated 14 Jun
18G/335/4/20/5/Ops
E18

SUPPORT, SAVE, SUPPLY

104. The RAF Lyneham motto, "Support, Save and Supply" seems to be an appropriate heading for this section of the Chapter which details the Hercules' support operations south of Ascension. In the early ^{1st} phase of the operation, Hercules aircraft and crews of Nos 24, 30, 47 and 70 Sqns ^{had been} were able to follow the well-established routines, used for other operations or during military exercises, albeit at a faster pace than was customary. It soon became apparent, however, that the Task Force was going to need support from the air in its passage beyond Ascension Island. Once they had ^{left} passed Ascension Island, the Task Force ships would soon sail out of airdrop range of Hercules C MK 1 or C MK 3 aircraft, which had the ability to carry a full payload only some 1200 nautical miles from a base and return to ~~that~~ base with normal fuel reserves.

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