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COS(Misc) 259/742/1

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OPERATION CORPORATE - FUTURE GARRISON OF THE  
FALKLAND ISLANDS AND DEPENDENCIES

In accordance with the instructions (1) of the Chiefs of Staff, the attached paper, prepared by ACDS(Pol), will be tabled for consideration by the Chiefs of Staff at their meeting on Tuesday 8 June 1982.

Attachment:

Operation CORPORATE - Future Garrison of the Falkland Islands and Dependencies (9 pages).

Note:

1. COS 59th Meeting/82, Item 6.

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FUTURE GARRISON OF THE FALKLAND ISLANDS AND DEPENDENCIES  
(A paper by ACDS(Pol))Introduction

1. The implications of establishing and maintaining a garrison in the Falkland Islands and Dependencies are fundamental to questions of post-repossession policy now being considered by Ministers. However it is as yet impossible fully to predict the international and political context within which a future UK military commitment might be set. Neither is it possible at this stage to identify the complete range of politico-military scenarios that will affect any future garrison force level which the Falkland Islands and Dependencies might require. Nevertheless there is a need to make a first broad assessment of future Argentinian military capabilities as well as other factors which might affect UK garrison force levels; and then to identify a range of options within which a garrison might be established.

Aim

2. The aim of this paper is to identify a range of options for future garrison force levels in the Falkland Islands and Dependencies.

Assumptions

3. The assumptions on which the paper is based are:
- a. There will be a military defeat and imposed withdrawal of Argentinian forces from the Falkland Islands.
  - b. The attitude of Argentina will continue to be hostile.
  - c. There will be no direct military involvement of any other Latin American countries, or the USSR.
  - d. A garrison will be needed for the foreseeable future. Its area of interest would include Ascension Island, which will continue to be needed by UK forces, and the sea lines of communication (SLOCs).
  - e. The initial garrison will be provided by those UK forces in place when the Falkland Islands have been reoccupied.
  - f. The airfield at Port Stanley will be lengthened to at least 6,000 feet by day 28 after construction work has been started.

Factors Affecting Garrison Force Levels

4. International Political Situation. After an interval in which UK administration will be re-established and the Islands allowed to recover from the conflict, there will be some form of discussion on the international dimension of the Falkland Islands. The eventual status of the Islands, in relation to UK, UN, USA, Argentina and the South American continent as a whole, will profoundly affect the Garrison requirement.
5. The Restoration of Argentinian Military Capability. Argentina can be expected to commence building up her Armed Forces to renewed effectiveness. The pace of this build up will depend on economic factors and the material aid which other nations are willing to offer. Argentinian progress will be a determinant factor in UK Defence Policy towards the Islands.
6. Argentinian Attitude and Will to Fight. The immediate period following a military defeat is almost certain to see a reduced Argentinian will to fight, although this may be restored in time. It is an uncertain quantity, varying between arms and units of Argentinian forces, and will affect our required force levels.
7. Time/Stability Equation. Whatever the Argentinians' public posture, the reality of their attitude in the first few years after re-occupation of the Falkland Islands will be important. It may range from a grudging acquiescence of the facts and thus a restoration of physical links with the Islands, to an unremitting hostility and continued military harassment.
8. Intelligence. There will be a requirement for timely intelligence to give sufficient firm warning of any future Argentinian attempt to repossess the Falkland Islands. Further studies are required on the degree to which this could allow time for reinforcement.
9. Reinforcement by the UK. Extension of the airfield at Port Stanley will allow reinforcement by air from the UK using long-range Hercules. It would take at least 4 days to fly in 1 infantry battalion and 7 days to fly in 2 infantry battalions at light scales. Reinforcement by sea would take at least 3 weeks.
10. Post Re-occupation. Argentina has already suffered significant losses in Armed Forces capability. The most severe effects so far have been in the air. Further operations may well increase the scale of these losses and the subsequent rebuilding of the capabilities affected might take time. The period which any reconstruction might take is uncertain and will depend on political developments within Argentina, national will, economic constraints and international support.

Argentina may therefore be unwilling to commit large forces piecemeal for operations to recapture the Falkland Islands, thus prejudicing the redevelopment of those forces. Initially the threat to the Islands might be from submarines, surface ships and aircraft which could make harassing attacks on UK SLOCs; bombing raids on the Falkland Islands by land-based or maritime air; and the infiltration of small parties by sea or air to carry out raids against installations on the Islands.

11. Once the operation to repossess the Falklands is complete the UK will have in place a large force in which substantial and early reductions will need to be made. The scale of force which was needed to recover the islands, shown at Annex A, will not be needed to retain them. It is not yet possible to define exactly to what level the force can be reduced, although it might be less than that required to meet the deterrent level discussed in paragraph 12 and shown at Annex B. The real question is the degree and timing of the run down to this force level when it is eventually defined. These decisions can only be made in the light of the factors adduced in this paper, and the developing international scene.

12. The Deterrence of a Hostile and Re-armed Argentina. In a year or so the Argentinian Naval, Army and Air Forces are likely to have been rebuilt and where practicable, modernised. This increased capability would make it possible for Argentina to step up raids against the Falkland Islands, Dependencies and SLOCs beyond the scale envisaged in paragraph 10 above. Most importantly Argentinian forces would have the capability to mount a full scale landing operation on the Falklands. Even a war of attrition could force the UK to commit a large garrison on the islands, or withdraw altogether.

13. It is estimated, within the limits imposed by the inherent uncertainties, that a threat of this nature would require a garrison on the lines proposed in Annex B. The force levels stem from the tasks to be carried out, which are seen as:

- a. Air and sea surveillance/deterrence patrols to include South Georgia and SLOCs.
- b. Air defence against hit-and-run air attacks.
- c. Mine counter measures operations.
- d. Defence of support shipping on SLOCs from air, surface and sub-surface attacks.
- e. Deployment and support of garrison forces to counter infiltration and raids on key points/facilities; and to secure the garrison air head to allow reinforcements by air if warning time permits.

f. Preventing the establishment of a viable bridgehead by a landing force; by the retention of local air superiority, the interdiction of an amphibious assault force, and the containment of invading troops on the ground until a decisive level of reinforcement can arrive by air.

14. A Minimum Garrison Force Level. There is another possibility, also after a passage of some time following re-occupation, which differs from the one outlined above. It depends substantially on political rather than military developments. A relatively secure place might have been found for the Falklands in the international community including the possibility of multilateral defence arrangements; Argentina's public statements might be balanced by a grudging but practical acceptance of the facts; day to day relations including the re-establishment of physical links with the Argentine might have been restored; the passage of time might have dispelled our worst fears of renewed Argentine aggression. Nevertheless, Argentinian military potential and political volatility would still require the UK to retain a garrison in the Islands, as a deterrent to renewed incursions. An appropriate garrison force level, which would be dependent on good intelligence of Argentinian intentions and the ability to be reinforced as shown in paragraphs 8 and 9, is at Annex C.

15. The roles of such a garrison would include:

- a. Offering a deterrent presence to discourage Argentinian military or quasi-military operations against the islands.
- b. Provision of early warning and interception of Argentinian raids before they reach the islands.
- c. Operations against Argentinian raiding parties who evade first-line security measures and gain a foot hold on the islands.

16. The tasks to be carried out in fulfilment of these roles would be:

- a. Maritime reconnaissance and early warning.
- b. Interception of air and maritime craft.
- c. Mobile air/land operations against Argentinian raiding parties, permitting subsequent reinforcement by additional UK forces should this become necessary.

#### Requirements of South Georgia

17. The island, which has no permanent civilian population, is only within the range of the limited numbers of Argentinian Air Force aircraft which have a long-range refuelling capability.

This would still allow Argentina to carry out a limited parachute force landing operation. While a small UK garrison would not necessarily deter this, it would provide a warning capability allowing reinforcement from the Falkland Islands if this proved necessary. It would be possible therefore to provide a small force of up to infantry company level, which could be supported by contingency reinforcement plans and maritime and air patrols from the Falkland Islands. Should the future status of the Falkland Islands make it unnecessary for the UK to retain a garrison there, the security of South Georgia would have to be treated as a separable issue.

#### Command, Control and Communications

18. A factor which will be common to the consideration of any garrison force level will be that of command, control and communications. A separate, urgent study is needed to consider and make recommendations about such matters as the possible formation of a Joint Task Force Headquarters or some other suitable local command arrangement; the level of command and communications support; command relationships with Single Service Headquarters and with the MOD; and the relationship with those elements of the garrison not in the Falkland Islands themselves. Such a study is being put in hand.

#### Other Influences and Commitments

19. Future arrangements for the Falkland Islands, and most particularly those related to garrison force levels, are inseparable from political, international, diplomatic and economic variables. For example any future military commitment should be compatible with the other commitments placed upon UK forces world-wide. In this context NATO remains the first priority of HMG's defence policy. Temporary redeployments to allow repossession of the Falkland Islands have been treated with understanding by our Allies. However a more permanent diversion of resources, for example on the scale of Annex B, would radically change and significantly weaken the UK's ability to contribute to the Alliance.

20. Other influences such as US policy towards Latin America; European trade with South American countries; pressure within the UN from Third World and other nations will all serve to affect the long-term position of the Falkland Islands. Above all, the precise international status of the Falkland Islands will most probably change, but cannot yet be foreseen. These considerations are ultimately at least as important as the Argentine military threat in their influence on UK commitments in the Falklands; they will affect the size of, or might even eliminate the need for, a UK garrison.

ANNEX A TO  
STATEMENT TO  
PARLIAMENT 23/7/82Conclusions

21. Following a reoccupation by force of the Falkland Islands, a garrison will be required for the foreseeable future. The main criteria on which the size of the garrison will be based are:

- a. International political, diplomatic and economic factors as they develop over the passage of time.
- b. Argentina's ability and will to mount operations to harass or re-occupy the Falkland Islands, the Dependencies and the SLOC.

22. In the immediate post-reoccupation period HMG will have large forces in place. After assessing the threat posed at that time by Argentina, and forecasting how that threat might develop within a defined time-scale, it will be possible to manage the run down of our forces to a level which would serve as an effective garrison. The prospective garrison levels outlined at Annexes A-C offer some basis for planning, in that they expose the ends of the spectrum within which the eventual garrison will lie.

23. A command and control study is being set in hand. Further work will be required to study intelligence requirements, to update costs and other force level needs as the situation develops.

Recommendations

24. It is recommended that the Chiefs of Staff take note of this paper, and review it when circumstances change.

4 June 1982

## Annexes:

- A. Anticipated Operation CORPORATE Force level at conclusion of Current Hostilities (1 page).
- B. Deterrent Force Level appropriate to a Hostile and Re-Armed Argentine (1 page).
- C. A Minimum Garrison Force Level (1 page).

ANNEX A TO  
 ATTACHMENT TO  
 COS(Misc) 259/742/1

ANTICIPATED OPERATION CORPORATE FORCE LEVEL AT CONCLUSION OF  
 CURRENT HOSTILITIES

<u>MARITIME</u>	<u>LAND</u>	<u>AIR</u> (within TEZ)
2 CVS	2 star HQ	28 Harrier
12 DD/FF	2 Bde HQs	2 S259 Radar
6 LPD/LSL	8 infantry battalions/RM	1 Chinook
10 RFA	Commandos	44 Sea King
5 RN-manned trawlers	2 troops CVR(T)	39 Wessex
1 Ice patrol ship	5 squadrons RE	20 Lynx
20 (+) STUFF	1 squadron Air Defence (RAF Rapier)	34 Gazelle/Wessex/Scout
		<u>At Ascension Island</u>
	5 batteries RA (105 mm)	2 Vulcan
	2 batteries Blowpipe	3 Phantom
		2 Nimrod
		2 Hercules LR
		15 Victor
		6 Harrier GR3
		3 SH

DETERRENT FORCE LEVEL APPROPRIATE TO A HOSTILE AND RE-ARMED ARGENTINEMARITIME (3)

1 CVS (if Port Stanley Airfield  
not available for strike/AD aircraft)

2 SSN

8 DD/FF (including SLOC protection  
and Falklands, South Georgia and  
Ascension guardships)

1 LPD/LSL (deployment of troops  
Falklands/South Georgia)

1 Ice Patrol Ship (winter only)

5 RN-manned trawlers (for  
surveillance)

1 Forward Repair Ship

5 ASW Sea King

6 Wessex 5 (tactical lift)

Afloat Support:

6 Tankers

1 30,000 ton freighter every 3  
months

6 solid support ships

Notes:

1. Includes detachment for South Georgia.
2. Could be located at Ascension Island.
3. The approximate numbers of men ashore would be: RN 15, Army 3,500, RAF 1,600; Total 5,115.

LAND (1)(3)

Bde HQ

2 troops CVR(T)

1 regiment RE(-)

3 infantry battalions with  
blowpipe

1 regiment RA (105 mm)

1 battery Rapier RA

1 squadron Rapier RAF

1 squadron AAC (Armed  
Gazelle and Scout)

AIR (3)

3 GCI/EW radars,  
communications and ADOC

12 Phantoms

4 Buccaneers

2 Hercules (Tanker/MR fit)

8 Chinooks (or equivalent)

4 MPA (reducing to 2 and  
tanker support)

8 Hercules resupply flights/week

ANNEX C TO  
 ATTACHMENT TO  
 COS(Misc) 259/742/1

A MINIMUM GARRISON FORCE LEVEL

<u>MARITIME</u> (1)	<u>LAND</u> (1)	<u>AIR</u> (1)
1 SSN	1 Infantry battalion	4 Phantoms
1 DD/FF in Falklands Area	1 infantry company	4 Buccaneers
1-2 DD/FF for SLOC protection	Intelligence/communications capability	2 Hercules (tanker MP fit)
1 OSS (summer only)	1 battery Rapier	6 Puma and 3 Chinook)
	Airfield damage repair	EW and GCI radar
1 Ice patrol ships (winter only)	Equipment stockpile for 2 battalions	Airfield navigation aids and communication
Afloat Support:	Logistic support units	
5 tankers		
1 30,000 ton freighter every 3 months		
2 solid support ships on station		
3 solid support ships on roulement		

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John Hatt

Note:

1. The approximate numbers of men ashore would be: RN 5, Army 1025, RAF 1,100; Total 2,130.