

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

CHIEFS OF STAFF COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a Meeting held in Room 5301, Ministry
of Defence, Main Building, Whitehall,
on WEDNESDAY 7 APRIL 1982 at 9.30 am

PRESENT

Admiral of the Fleet Sir Terence Lewin,
Chief of the Defence Staff

Admiral Sir Henry Leach,
Chief of the Naval Staff

General Sir Edwin Brammall,
Chief of the General Staff

Air Chief Marshal Sir Michael Beetham,
Chief of the Air Staff

ALSO PRESENT

The Rt Hon John Nott MP
Secretary of State for Defence

Air Chief Marshal Sir David Evans,
Vice Chief of the Defence Staff
(Personnel and Logistics)

Lieutenant General Sir James Glover,
Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff
(Intelligence)

Air Vice-Marshal J A Gilbert,
Assistant Chief of the Defence
Staff (Policy)

Rear-Admiral D W Brown,
Assistant Chief of the Defence
Staff (Operations)

Colonel D J Milton,
Representing the
Assistant Chief of the Defence
Staff (Signals)

Colonel M M S Finnis,
Representing the
Assistant Chief of the Defence Staff
(Personnel and Logistics)

Air Commodore A Beill,
Director Defence Operational
Movements Staff

Sir Frank Cooper,
Permanent Under Secretary

Mr I S McDonald,
Deputy Chief of Public Relations

Mr P R H Wright,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

SECRETARIAT

Brigadier J A C G Eyre
Captain J E S Raymond RN
Lieutenant Colonel W S Bale
Wing Commander A M Wills

C O N T E N T S

PART I - ITEMS DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING

- 1-6. (1) OPERATION CORPORATE
- 7. (1) WITHDRAWAL FROM BELIZE
- 8. (1) USE OF GURKHAS WITH 5 INFANTRY BRIGADE

PART II - ITEMS DEALT WITH PRIOR TO THE MEETING

N11

Note:

- 1. Issued as a Confidential Annex.

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COS 5TH MEETING/82

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MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

CHIEFS OF STAFF COMMITTEE

CONFIDENTIAL ANNEX

TO

COS 5TH MEETING/82 HELD ON
MONDAY 5 APRIL 1982 AT 9.30amITEM 1. INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENT

1. SIR TERENCE LEWIN (Chief of the Defence Staff) invited LIEUTENANT GENERAL GLOVER (Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff (Intelligence)) to update them on the situation in the Falkland Islands and South Georgia.

2. LIEUTENANT GENERAL GLOVER said few developments had occurred since his last briefing (1). As far as international affairs were concerned, Portugal had agreed to the use of the Azores as a staging base. He said that the Chileans had increased their own land forces in the South of Chile; were prepared to give us daily weather forecasts in the likely areas of operation; had asked that the Hunter aircraft they had purchased should be delivered as soon as possible; and that a high level meeting was due to take place today at 1200 their time, which would be attended by the President and the Chilean Chiefs of Staff. He assessed that the Commanders of the Chilean Navy and Air Force supported the UK and that they had provisionally proposed the use of an airfield on the island of San Felix. Continuing, LIEUTENANT GENERAL GLOVER said that the Naval dispositions were:

a. TG40. This group had divided. Their transport ships had moved to Comodoro Rivadavia to reload. The 2 frigates were standing off; one submarine was returning to port, and the other submarine was remaining on patrol at Latitude 50° South.

b. TG 20 This group was in shallower water, probably as a result of their appreciation of a likely threat from our SSNs.

c. TG 60 The corvette in this group had been damaged during the landing at Grytviken and was in company with a supply ship and icebreaker off South Georgia.

Note:

1. COS 4th Meeting/82.

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Overall he assessed that the Argentine Navy was now refuelling and replenishing with only a small number of ships at sea.

3. LIEUTENANT GENERAL GLOVER assessed that in the Falkland Islands the Argentines were building up their forces and were making maximum use of the 7 x C130s. He estimated that their forces on the Falkland Islands now numbered approximately 3,000 under command of 9th Infantry Brigade Headquarters, and comprised a battalion from the Brigade, 2 x Marine battalions and an element of 4th Airborne battalion. On the island of South Georgia he said that the Commander had asked for anti-tank rockets and a supply of night sights.

4. In summary, LIEUTENANT GENERAL GLOVER explained the Argentines were using the time gap before our Task Group arrived to build up their forces to a maximum and prepare defensive positions.

5. In discussion the following points were made:

a. The meeting of the Chilean President and his Chiefs of Staff was crucial. HE the Ambassador in Santiago had been advised by the Chilean Chief of Naval Staff that an approach via diplomatic and inter-Governmental channels would be inappropriate.

b. While the possible availability of the airfield on San Felix was welcomed, it was 1900 miles from the area of operations, unless the Nimrods overflew Argentina. In view of this an airfield further South, which would allow Nimrods to remain longer on task, was essential. However, San Felix could be used as the main operating base with other more Southerly airfields in Chile providing refuelling facilities. The ideal would be permission to utilize an airfield between San Felix and Punta Arenas which was sufficiently far South to reduce the transit time, but not so far South as to be within the strike range of Argentine aircraft.

c. Although concern was expressed that the Argentine possessed ROLAND, it was believed that they did not have the associated radar which would be necessary if they were to be able to fully exploit its capabilities.

6. In discussion the following points were agreed:
- a. The sale of Hunter aircraft to the Chileans should be investigated immediately. The Ambassador in Santiago should be given instructions which enabled him to place the UK in the most advantageous bargaining position.
 - b. The Royal Engineers had built and recently resurveyed the airfield in the Falkland Islands and should provide a detailed brief.
 - c. The more refuelling facilities which could be obtained the greater would be the flexibility allowed to ships and aircraft supporting the Task Force.
7. Summing up, SIR TERENCE LEWIN said that they would wish to instruct DCDS(I) to obtain the details of ROLAND from the United States, and to provide a brief on the airfield at the Falkland Islands. Continuing, he said that they would wish to invite the FCO to provide HE the Ambassador in Santiago with instructions on the sale of Hunter aircraft and use of Chilean airfields.

ITEM 2. OWN FORCES

8. Expanding on the Force Tote SITREP (Issue 7) (2) REAR-ADMIRAL BROWN (Assistant Chief of the Defence Staff (Operations)) reported that HMS ENDURANCE had been ordered to proceed to the Ascension Islands; 2 x civilian Belfast aircraft had lifted 4 x RN Wessex helicopters to Ascension; and RFA TIDEPOOL, which had been transferred to the command of the Royal Navy, was due to arrive in Curacao at midnight on 12 April to load fuel. Continuing, REAR-ADMIRAL BROWN said that 4 x Scorpion and 4 x Scimitar from The Blues and Royals were now under the operational command of 3 Commando Brigade and would be loaded on MV ELK; and the Department of Trade were investigating the availability of other ships from trade, in case 5 Infantry Brigade was required to join the Task Force.
9. In conclusion he said that 2 x Mark I Nimrods at St Mawgan were at 6 hours notice to deploy to Ascension Island. The Nimrods would be deployed to enhance communications and to provide possible airdrops to the Task Force once the initial Ascension Island build-up had been completed and when fuel stocks there had been enhanced.

Note:

2. Attachment COS S12(1) Force Tote SITREP.

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10. In discussion the following points were made:
- a. The replenishment of bulk fuel on Ascension Island was the responsibility of the Americans and stocks were not due to be replenished until 14 April. An additional factor was that there was only one serviceable bowser on the island, and this problem could not be overcome until additional bowsers and pumping equipment were flown in by Hercules. However the use of Dakar as a refuelling stop was now helping to alleviate the problem.
 - b. There was a need to maintain the utmost security on the movements of RFA TIDEPOOL in case Panama, who had voted against the UK at the UN, denied the RFA passage through the Canal.
11. It was agreed that they would invite the FCO to approach the Swiss Government to safeguard the interests of BAS civilians remaining on South Georgia.

ITEM 3. PUBLIC RELATIONS

12. MR McDONALD (Deputy Chief of Public Relations) said that the Press was full of the Falkland Islands issue. The comment was very favourable of the strong line being taken, but some papers were beginning to look at the issues ahead. He added that there would be a Press Conference at 1530 today for the Governor and the Royal Marine Commander. The Governor would be taking the lead at the Conference. In addition the Prime Minister would be appearing on ITN news in the evening. He assessed that Press interest this afternoon would centre on the requisition of ships.

13. The SECRETARY OF STATE asked the Chiefs of Staff to consider the need to present the use of CANBERRA positively. Taking up ships from trade had of course been part of contingency planning for many years, but he believed that it was important to stress that the Task Force could be at sea for a long period and that in such circumstances CANBERRA would provide essential accommodation and facilities. SIR TERENCE LEWIN agreed that this was the case. Additionally the 2 x CVS were being used in their primary role and would be loaded with the maximum possible number of aircraft. In these circumstances there would be insufficient room on board to both operate aircraft and keep the embarked troops fit and battle ready.

14. The SECRETARY OF STATE said that he intended to brief Members of Parliament himself, but that he wished to have an appropriate representative from each Service present at the briefings. He welcomed the paper (3) which had been prepared.

ITEM 4. DECISIONS REQUIRED

15. The Chiefs of Staff reviewed the forecast of decisions (4) which had been identified. REAR ADMIRAL BROWN (Assistant Chief of Defence Staff (Operations)) said that the problems concerning the legal position of the UK in the conflict, and of the interpretation of the UN Charter, Article 51 were closely allied. A decision was required in order to allow planning to go ahead. In discussion the following points were made:

a. Legal advisers were producing an answer today but their initial view had been that, while there would be no legal problems as far as military action in the Falkland Islands were concerned the position regarding an attack on Argentine territory required further examination.

b. Concern was expressed about refuelling facilities in the long term. Once military action had taken place countries might reassess their offers of facilities.

ITEM 5. SSN RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

16. SIR HENRY LEACH said that the first SSN (SPARTAN) will arrive in the Falkland operational area late on 11 April, having slowed down some 72 hours earlier to increase frequency of communications reception and to allow a covert and quiet arrival in area. Further he said that if the Government wished to order any military action to be taken upon HMS SPARTAN's arrival in the vicinity of the Falkland Islands it was imperative for her to receive Rules of Engagement by noon 7 April. Although the subject was to be addressed in the Military Appreciation Paper (5), he would like them to consider this requirement as soon as possible and in advance of the completion of the paper.

Notes:

3. COS(Misc) 86/742/1 Parliamentary and Press Briefing.
4. COS 4th Meeting/82.
5. COS TS4(2) Military Appreciation.

17. In discussion the following points were made:
- a. If Ministers were to make a decision by 7 April the Military Appreciation Paper would be required by the SECRETARY OF STATE this evening.
 - b. It was very difficult to isolate the SSN Rules of Engagement decision from the overall politico military decisions which would need to be examined in the military appreciation of the situation.
 - c. The Navy Department would provide a brief on SSN communications to the SECRETARY OF STATE.

18. In summing up SIR TERENCE LEWIN said that they would wish to return to this proposal in their discussions at their meeting later in the day.

ITEM 6. MILITARY APPRECIATION

19. REAR ADMIRAL BROWN (Assistant Chief of the Defence Staff (Operations)) said that the paper was now being refined and would be placed as a draft before them later in the day. In discussion the following points were made:

- a. The study of Gibraltar, although part of the Military Appreciation Paper, had already been addressed by the FCO and the Ministry of Defence. A paper had been given to the Prime Minister in which the conclusions were that Spain was unlikely to take action against Gibraltar.
- b. The SECRETARY OF STATE said that he hoped the position of South Georgia was being considered in the Military Appreciation Paper. He explained that if the UK had to settle for a solution which did not recover all of the Falkland Islands then South Georgia could become very important.

ITEM 7. WITHDRAWAL FROM BELIZE

20. SIR TERENCE LEWIN considered that they should delay the withdrawal from Belize by three months, because there was no longer the capability to carry out concurrently both Operation CORPORATE and the withdrawal

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as planned. The Chiefs of Staff agreed with the Chief of the Defence Staff, who then invited the Vice Chief of the Defence Staff (Personnel and Logistics) to draft a submission for the Secretary of State to be forwarded later that day.

ITEM 8. USE OF GURKHAS WITH 5 INFANTRY BRIGADE

21. MR PATRICK WRIGHT (FCO Defence Department) said that, having consulted Ministers, he felt that there could be disadvantage, from a Public Relations viewpoint, in deploying a Gurkha force if 5 Infantry Brigade were required for Operation CORPORATE. SIR EDWIN BRAMALL fundamentally disagreed, and said that the King of Nepal had made his soldiers available to the United Kingdom to fulfil any role thought fit by Her Majesty's Government. SIR TERENCE LEWIN said that, the Chiefs of Staff were not planning to remove the Gurkhas from the Brigade's order of battle.

21. Summing up SIR TERENCE LEWIN said they would need later to discuss the Military Appreciation Paper and that the Committee remained at 1¹/₂ hours notice for further meetings.

Annex:

A. Operation CORPORATE - Forecast of Decisions or Actions Required (3 pages).

OPERATION CORPORATE - FORECAST OF DECISIONS OR ACTIONS REQUIRED

ITEM	ARISING FROM COS MEETING	DECISION OR ACTION REQUIRED	BY	PROGRESS	CONTINUED
0001	2/82 Item 4 para 8a	ROE for SSNs	Ministers	ND have under review	0019
0002	2/82 Item 4 para 8a	Likely employment of SSNs	Ministers	COS to discuss	
0003	2/82 Item 4 para 8b	Directive for Task Force Commander	Ministers	ND have under review - can be signalled after Force sails	
0004	2/82 Item 4 para 8b	Directive for Embarked Military Force Commander	Ministers	ND have under review - can be signalled after Force sails	
0005	2/82 Item 4 para 8c	Instructions for RFA FORT AUSTIN	-	ND action	
0006	2/82 Item 4 para 8d	Legal position of UK in dispute with the Argentine	Ministers	FCO are investigating	See also 0014
0007	2/82 Item 4 para 8e	Advice on evacuation of British Nationals (1000) from Argentina.	Ministers	FCO advise that this could be undertaken by routine civilian air services.	TWC 5 Apr

ITEM	ARISING FROM COS MEETING	DECISION OR ACTION REQUIRED	BY	PROGRESS	CONTINUED
0008	3/82 Item 4 para 11	Use of facilities at Ascension Island	-	PUS reports no difficulty with blanket use of facilities at Ascension.	Complete
0009	4/82 Item 3 para 11	Availability of Chilean airfields	Ministers	FCO are investigating	
0010	4/82 Item 5	Movement of HMS ENDURANCE either East or West	CNS	ENDURANCE being withdrawn to Ascension Islands	Complete
0011	4/82 Item 5	Movement of Spearhead Bn and an SAS Sqn	COS	Spearhead Bn to deploy with 3 Cdo Bde. SAS decision out of committee.	Complete
0012	4/82 Item 5	Clearance for staging facilities at Dakar, Freetown and Cape Verde.	Ministers	Facilities at Dakar approved.	
0013	4/82 Item 6 para 15	Positioning of RM SBS	COS	1 section to embark SPLENDID At Ascension; 1 section to embark CONQUEROR	Complete
0014	4/82 Item 7 para 16	Clarification of legal aspects of Article 51 of UN Charter	Ministers	FCO are investigating	

ITEM	ARISING FROM COS MEETING	DECISION OR ACTION REQUIRED	BY	PROGRESS	CONTINUED
0015	5/82 Item I para 7	Sale of Hunter aircraft to Chile.	FCO	FCO are actioning	
0016	5/82 Item I para 7	Falkland Island airfield	ACDS(O)	COS Brief by DCDS(I) by 071200A Apr - (Out of Committee)	
0017	5/82 Item 1 para 7	Details of Argentine's ROLAND weapon systems	DCDS(I)	DCDS(I) investigating with US.	
0018	5/82 Item 2 para 11	Swiss Government to be invited to represent interests of BAS civilians	FCO	FCO are investigating.	
0019	5/82 Item 5 para 16	ROE for SSNs	COS	COS 6/82.	
0020	5/82 Item 6 para 19b	South Georgia	COS	COS 6/82.	
0021	5/82 Item 5 para 17a	SSN Communications	Navy Dept	S of S Brief by Navy Department.	Complete
0022	5/82 Item 7	Delay Belize Withdrawal by 3 months	VCDS(P&L)	Draft submission complete.	