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DEFENCE AND OVERSEA POLICY COMMITTEE

SUB-COMMITTEE ON THE SOUTH ATLANTIC AND
THE FALKLAND ISLANDS

MINUTES of a Meeting held at
Chequers on SUNDAY 30 MAY 1982
at 4.00 pm

PRESENT

The Rt Hon Margaret Thatcher MP
Prime Minister

The Rt Hon William Whitelaw MP
Secretary of State for the
Home Department

The Rt Hon Francis Pym MP
Secretary of State for Foreign
and Commonwealth Affairs

The Rt Hon John Nott MP
Secretary of State for Defence

The Rt Hon Cecil Parkinson MP
Chancellor of the Duchy of
Lancaster and Paymaster General

THE FOLLOWING WERE ALSO PRESENT

The Rt Hon Sir Michael Havers QC MP
Attorney General

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

Sir Antony Acland
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Sir Frank Cooper
Ministry of Defence

Sir Michael Palliser
Cabinet Office

SECRETARIAT

Mr A D S Goodall
Mr R L L Facer

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1. MILITARY ISSUES

THE CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE STAFF briefed the Sub-Committee on the latest military situation.

THE PRIME MINISTER, summing up the discussion, said that British forces on the Islands should be congratulated on their outstanding feat of arms in taking Darwin and Goose Green. It was disturbing that the press were continuing to speculate about British military moves: a British Broadcasting Corporation report on activity by the Queen Elizabeth II near South Georgia could have had very damaging consequences. Consideration should now be given to the terms and the timing of a surrender call to the Argentine garrison.

The Sub-Committee -

Invited the Defence Secretary, in consultation with the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, to consider the modalities of a possible surrender call to the Argentine garrison in the Falklands Islands.

2. POLITICAL ISSUES

The Sub-Committee had before them telegrams nos. 884-5, 887 and 892 from the United Kingdom Permanent Representative to the United Nations Sir Antony Parsons, reporting discussions with the United Nations Secretary General, Senor Perez de Cuellar, including details of the Argentine proposals for a ceasefire; and telegrams nos. 1963-4 from the British Ambassador in Washington, Sir Nicholas Henderson, reporting conversations with the United States Secretary of State, Mr Haig.

THE PRIME MINISTER summing up the discussion, said that the Argentine terms for a ceasefire were unacceptable. Sir Antony Parsons should tell Senor Perez de Cuellar that the United Kingdom's position remained as set out in the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary's message to him (Foreign and Commonwealth Office telegram no. 475 to New York) and should hold out no hope of altering it in the face of continued Argentine intransigence: he should also tell the Secretary General that the Government would prefer that the text of the message should not be published in full because it could cause difficulties if the mention of United States forces in the final paragraph were published.

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The Sub-Committee -

Invited the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary to send instructions to Sir Antony Parsons in accordance with the Prime Minister's summing up.

Cabinet Office

1 June 1982

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