

SECRET

Ref. A08181

PRIME MINISTER

Cabinet: Falkland Islands

BACKGROUND

As agreed at OD(SA) today, the Secretary of State for Defence will give the Cabinet a short informal briefing on certain military factors relevant to decisions which the Cabinet may have to take during the Falkland Islands crisis. He intends to keep his briefing to a low level of security classification and not to go into details of force deployments. Since this will not be a technical military briefing, Mr Nott does not propose that he should be accompanied by the Chief of the Defence Staff. It is proposed that this briefing should be first business, ahead of Parliamentary Affairs.

HANDLING

- 2. You should invite the Secretary of State for Defence to give his briefing. No doubt you will wish to invite questions.
- 3. It may be convenient to follow with a brief discussion of the situation in the South Atlantic generally, rather than take this separately under the heading of Parliamentary or Foreign Affairs.
- 4. Immediately before Cabinet, OD(SA) will have been given a detailed briefing on military options and this may have led on to a decision by OD(SA) that the Amphibious Force should sail from Ascension on 23 April rather than wait there until the stragglers (Intrepid, etc) arrive on 29 April. If so you may wish to inform the Cabinet of this decision.
- 5. If the briefing and discussion are prolonged, some of the business scheduled for E may have to slip; but it is clearly important not to cut discussion on this subject very short, given the need to carry Cabinet as a whole with the policy.

REA

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

21 April 1982

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