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DOE 2ND MEETING/82

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MINISTRY OF DEFENCE  
DEFENCE OPERATIONS EXECUTIVE

MINUTES of a Meeting held in  
Room 5301, Ministry of Defence,  
Main Building, Whitehall, on  
WEDNESDAY 31 MARCH 1982 at 2.00 pm

*[Handwritten signatures and initials]*  
SAND  
Mm/llp

ITEM 1. INTELLIGENCE BRIEFING

1. The Executive heard the latest intelligence information. It had been reported that an Argentinian merchant ship was steaming towards the Falklands from Comodoro Rivadavia. It was carrying certain command personnel, but nothing was known of any embarked force. However, this vessel has the capability to carry a battalion sized force. The estimated time of arrival at Port Stanley was 1500 on Friday 2 April 1982. There was no further change in the intelligence situation.

ITEM 2. DEPLOYMENT OF ENDURANCE

2. The Executive agreed there was nothing that could be done in the short term to prevent an Argentinian occupation of one of the outlying islands. The only forces available to counter any threat from Argentina were ENDURANCE and the Royal Marines, both embarked and at Port Stanley. The Executive questioned the military prudence of ENDURANCE remaining in South Georgia while the most immediate threat appeared to be in the Falkland Islands. It was agreed that as an expedient measure ENDURANCE would remain at sea within 50 miles of South Georgia; such an order would be consistent both with her normal daily practice of mounting coastal patrols and with ministerial statements that ENDURANCE would remain in the South Georgia area. The Executive further agreed that ACDS(Ops), in conjunction with ACNS(O), would conduct a detailed examination of the advantages and disadvantages of the deployment options for HMS ENDURANCE and that this study was required urgently if, as a result, ENDURANCE was to sail for Stanley in time to arrive before the Argentinian ship from Comodoro Rivadavia.

ITEM 3. POSSIBLE SIGNAL TO HE THE GOVERNOR

3. It was reported to the Executive that Ministers believed HE The Governor might welcome military guidance on Rules of Engagement and on the limits which should be set on resistance in the face of an overwhelming invasion force. In addition Ministers wished to know

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how he and the Islanders saw the situation. After discussion the Executive agreed that a signal should be sent by AUS(D Staff), in conjunction with the FCO, which reflected their discussion in committee and answered the remit from Ministers, but avoided any suggestion of withdrawing HE's authority to make his own decisions as the local Commander-in-Chief.

ITEM 4. AIR DEFENCE

4. The Executive discussed a request (1) from the Secretary of State on the feasibility of airlifting a Rapier detachment to Ascension, and for it to be picked up from there by RFA FORT AUSTIN. Following a short discussion, the Executive agreed that ACDS(Ops), in conjunction with the Service Departments, should prepare a reply to the request.

Note:

1. MO 5/21 dated 31 March 1982.

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