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OD(SA)(82) 13th Meeting

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CABINET

DEFENCE AND OVERSEA POLICY COMMITTEE

SUB-COMMITTEE ON THE SOUTH ATLANTIC AND
THE FALKLAND ISLANDS

MINUTES of a Meeting held at
10 Downing Street on
WEDNESDAY 21 APRIL 1982 at 9.30 am

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 Cecil Parkinson MP
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster
and Paymaster General

THE FOLLOWING WERE ALSO PRESENT

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

Sir Antony Acland
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Sir Ian Sinclair
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Sir Michael Palliser
Cabinet Office

SECRETARIAT

Sir Robert Armstrong
Mr R L Wade-Gery
Mr R L L Facer
Brigadier J A C G Eyre

SUBJECT

SITUATION IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC

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SITUATION IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC

Previous Reference: OD(SA)(82) 10th Meeting

The Sub-Committee considered a Note by the Secretaries (OD(SA)(82) 20) to which was attached a memorandum by officials of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office suggesting possible counter-proposals on the latest revision of the draft Anglo-Argentine agreement received on 19 April from the United States Secretary of State, Mr Haig. They also had before them a Note by the Secretaries (OD(SA)(82) 18) to which was attached a memorandum by officials of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office comparing the latest draft of the agreement with the earlier draft worked out with Mr Haig the previous week.

THE PRIME MINISTER, summing up the discussion, said that as little as possible should be said in Parliament before the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary's departure for Washington. The Sub-Committee had found the comparison study (OD(SA)(82) 18) clear and helpful. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary should be guided, in his forthcoming talks with Mr Haig, both by the counter-proposals study (OD(SA)(82) 20) and by the Sub-Committee's more cautious attitude on a number of the formulations and comments put forward therein. It would also be useful if he could suggest to Mr Haig a new passage for the draft agreement setting out arrangements for an American guarantee both of the enforcement of the proposed agreement during the interim period (including the security of Stanley airfield) and of the security of the Islands thereafter. Other possibilities which might be discussed with Mr Haig were the alternative of a guarantee by the United Nations rather than the United States, which might involve the presence of a United Nations force; and the conducting of a test of local opinion before the end of 1982 under American or United Nations auspices. Further consideration would need to be given to Britain's objectives in the proposed negotiations for a definitive settlement to follow whatever interim arrangements might be agreed on. A disturbing vacuum might be caused if British schoolteachers were leaving the Islands as had been reported. It would be useful if an early meeting of the Cabinet could be given an outline briefing on the military situation.

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The Sub-Committee -

1. Invited the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary to be guided during his talks in Washington by the suggestions in OD(SA)(82) 20 and by the other considerations referred to by the Prime Minister in her summing up.
2. Instructed Sir Michael Palliser, in his capacity as Special Adviser in the Cabinet Office, to arrange for the preparation of a study of British objectives in relation to a longer-term settlement.
3. Invited the Defence Secretary to brief the Cabinet on the military situation at their meeting on 22 April.

Cabinet Office

21 April 1982

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