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OD(SA)(82) 36th Meeting

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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
10 Downing Street on
MONDAY 17 MAY 1982 at 10.00 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 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 Michael Palliser
Cabinet Office

SECRETARIAT

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

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1. MILITARY ISSUES

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

The Sub-Committee -
Took note.

2. DIPLOMATIC ISSUES

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SIR ANTHONY ACLAND said that the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary had seen the United States Secretary of State, Mr Haig, in Luxembourg. He seemed willing to try to persuade the Argentines not to press the South Georgia issue. But he had been less forthcoming about a possible American guarantee of a settlement. He also did not want the United States to act alone. A possible way forward might be to concentrate on the need for an American military presence in the Falklands in the context of verifying the military withdrawal.

THE PRIME MINISTER, summing up the discussion, said that American co-operation remained essential. Further consideration should be given to the possibility of bringing pressure to bear on Argentina through suitable Latin American intermediaries, eg Brazil and Mexico. The possibility of the Pope cancelling his proposed pastoral visit to Britain was unwelcome. Cancellation could look like a moral victory for Argentina. If it would be helpful to the Vatican, British Ministers could avoid involvement in the visit.

The Sub-Committee -

Invited the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary to give further consideration to the points raised by the Prime Minister in her summing up.

Cabinet Office
17 May 1982

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