

SUBJECT

NOTE OF A MEETING:

THE FALKLAND ISLANDS: OPERATIONAL ORDERS FOR SSNs

The Prime Minister held a meeting at Chequers on 10 April. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, the Secretary of State for Defence and the Chief of Defence Staff were present.

Following general discussion over lunch, the meeting considered operational orders for SSNs, on the basis of the option set out in a note prepared by the CDS - *attached.*

Ministers agreed that the instructions in force at the time of the meeting should be altered to the option explained by the CDS. On this basis, the previous instructions would automatically be re-instated at 1600 hours on 11 April unless Ministers gave new orders before that time. A further meeting would be called at approximately 1400 hours on 11 April if developments made this necessary.

*MAD*

22 April 1982

FALKLAND ISLANDS: OPERATIONAL ORDERS FOR SSNs

1. Under her present orders the first SSN in the Falkland Islands Exclusion Zone has orders to sink an Argentine ship as soon as the Zone comes into force at 0400 hours on 12 April.
2. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary considers that there may be diplomatic developments as a result of Mr Haig's activities which make it desirable to be able to stop the SSN executing these operational orders up to the last possible moment. At present this last possible moment is 10 p.m. on Saturday 10 April.
3. This position can be altered by sending a signal to the SSN to cancel its previous instructions and to say that Rule 2 will be in operation from 0400 hours on 12 April (Rule 2 simply provides for self defence). Thereafter Ministers can decide to revert to the previous instructions at any time and be confident that such instructions will be received by the SSN within 12 hours. If Ministers delay reverting to the previous instructions beyond 1600 hours on Sunday 11 April there is a possibility that the SSN will not receive and therefore act on the previous instructions until some time after 0400 on 12 April. This is the only positive penalty of this procedure. But there could be other operational implications: the reason for the present earlier deadline is to guard against the risk of communication breakdown and to give the SSN Commander more time to plan his operations.