

Ref: B06480



PRIME MINISTER

c Sir Robert Armstrong

Falklands: OD(SA) on 28th April

Diplomatic Issues

1. Your meeting at 0900 hours tomorrow should begin with a report from the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary on the Haig situation.

- If the Argentines have accepted Mr Haig's proposals, the Sub-committee will need to consider whether we can too and what should be said to the Cabinet.
- If they have turned him down, you should seek to establish whether he now accepts that his mediation attempt is at an end; if so, whether and in what form he will be announcing United States support for Britain; and if not, whether an approach from you to President Reagan is needed to clarify the position.
- If the Argentine attitude is still unclear, the Sub-Committee will need to decide how long we and the Americans should allow such equivocation to continue before deeming no answer to be a No answer.

2. If the Haig proposals are still in play, the Sub-Committee may wish to take note that OD(SA)(82) 31 comments on some apparently minor differences between the text Mr Haig gave us last week (OD(SA)(82) 25) and the one he has given both the Argentines and us this week; that OD(SA)(82) 29 circulates the latest American draft of a Protocol on the establishment and operation of the Special Interim Authority, which would be signed by the United States as well as Argentina and Britain. No decisions are needed in either case.



Military Issues

3. The Chief of the Defence Staff should report on the latest situation.
4. You could then clear two comparatively minor matters out of the way -
  - (i) The Defence Secretary should report on what has been done about the shot prisoner, and why.
  - (ii) The Chief of the Defence Staff should explain the need for a new warning to the Argentines, this time about their merchant ships on the high seas, as proposed in OD(SA)(82) 30. If the Defence Secretary and Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary agree, the proposal should be endorsed.
5. That leaves the five big decisions identified at this morning's meeting (the Ministry of Defence will not be ready by tomorrow to make proposals on the sixth, ie the Argentine aircraft carrier).

12m - (a) The TEZ. Do the Sub-Committee agree to announcing this tomorrow? That is likely to be the decision, whatever has happened on the Haig front. If so, can the announcement be at 1100 London time tomorrow, to come into effect 24 hours later? This particular timing would suit the Ministry of Defence, since the TEZ would then start just before dawn (local time) in the Falklands; the Cabinet would still be sitting when the announcement was made, but you may think that acceptable since you warned them last week that this was the sort of issue on which it would probably not be possible to consult them in advance.

(b) Stanley airfield. Do the Sub-Committee agree that it may be destroyed, at the discretion of the military commanders, any time after the TEZ is in force? Or should they be given unconditional discretion only to strafe it, with conditional discretion to destroy (ie bomb) it if the Argentines in fact go on using it? There may be a case for postponing this decision if Mr Haig's hat is still in the ring.



(c) Vulcans. Does the Sub-Committee remain content that they may be deployed to Ascension tomorrow night? That is the only immediate decision. You need not decide before 29th April whether to give the military commanders discretion to use them against the airfield.

(d) Special Forces. The Ministry of Defence 's paper (OD(SA)(82) 29) seeks three decisions -

- May they be inserted into the Falkland Islands?
- May this be done any time after the TEZ is in force?
- Any restrictions on their operational activities (eg minimise Argentine casualties)?

Their prime role is to gather intelligence. This is urgent, because of the invasion window. But it could no doubt wait a day or so, if there is a strong case for that on Haig grounds.

(e) The Amphibious Group. Should it sail from Ascension on 29th April? This is essential for the window. But since the ships are at six hours notice, the decision could (just) be left until your meeting at 0930 on 29th April.

Next meetings

6. Already fixed: 0930 on Thursday, 29th April; and 0945 on Friday, 30th April.

*R L Wade-Gery*

27th April 1982

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