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OD(SA)(82) 7th 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 in the  
Chiefs of Staff Briefing Room,  
Main Building, Ministry of Defence on  
THURSDAY 15 APRIL 1982 at 10.15 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 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

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 D H Colvin  
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) 6th Meeting

The Sub-Committee had before them a Note by the Secretaries (OD(SA)(82) 12) proposing alternative redrafts of the final paragraph of the draft Memorandum provisionally agreed on 12 April with the United States Secretary of State, Mr Haig (OD(SA)(82) 10). At the conclusion of their meeting they were joined by the Chief of Naval Staff, Chief of the General Staff and Chief of the Air Staff and were given an appreciation of the military situation and prospects.

THE PRIME MINISTER, summing up the discussion, said that following his retirement as Permanent Under Secretary of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Sir Michael Palliser had taken up the temporary post as Special Adviser in the Cabinet Office which had been suggested at the Sub-Committee's meeting on 8 April (OD(SA)(82) 3rd Meeting). As regards Mr Haig's negotiations, the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary would now send him an urgent message covering two points. First, it should underline the need for the United States Government to play a special role in ensuring both the enforcement of the proposed agreement during the interim period (including the exclusion of Argentine military forces) and the security of the Islands thereafter (including the airfield in particular, as the most likely point of entry for a second Argentine invasion); this seemed certain to involve some deployment of American forces. Second, the message should propose an alternative to Mr Haig's redraft of paragraph 8 of the draft Memorandum, on the following lines - .

December 31, 1982 will conclude the interim period. During this period, the signatories shall negotiate with a view to determining the future definitive status of each of the three groups of Islands, within the framework of the provisions of the UN Charter relating to non-self-governing territories, and consistently with the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, United Nations General Assembly Resolutions 1514(XV) and 2625(XXV) and, so far as islands with a settled population are concerned, in accordance with their wishes and interests, which shall be ascertained by a sounding of their opinion to be supervised by the Special Commission. If it is not possible to complete the processes envisaged in this paragraph by December 31, 1982, the interim period may be extended for three months by agreement between the parties.

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Further consideration should be given to another possible alternative, as a fall-back; this might be based on the second variant at Annex A to OD(SA)(82) 12. It should also be established whether the former Executive and Legislative Councils of the Falkland Islands had had any responsibility for South Georgia or the South Sandwich Islands, which had been administered as dependencies of the Falkland Islands but should not necessarily be treated in the same way in any long-term settlement, since they had an importance of their own in relation to Antarctic claims. The possibility of early enactment of an Emergency Powers Bill had been suggested at the Cabinet on 14 April; at first sight the case for this did not seem compelling, but she would arrange for the issue to be discussed at a separate meeting with other Ministers concerned. In order to increase the military options available it would be sensible to reinforce the British Task Group with a further battalion of troops and appropriate additional ships which should if possible include HMS Intrepid. Rules of Engagement for the Task Group would need to be considered by the Sub-Committee the following day.

The Sub-Committee -

1. Invited the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary to send an urgent message to Mr Haig on the lines indicated by the Prime Minister in her summing up.
2. Invited the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary to give further consideration to a second alternative redraft for paragraph 8 of the proposed Agreed Memorandum; and to the legal status of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands.
3. Took note that the Prime Minister would arrange for separate consideration of the case for enacting an Emergency Powers Bill.
4. Invited the Defence Secretary to arrange for the Task Group to be reinforced as indicated by the Prime Minister in her summing up.
5. Agreed to resume their discussion at 9.30 am on 16 April.

Cabinet Office  
15 April 1982

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