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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 FRIDAY 11 JUNE 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 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

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 A D S Goodall Mr R L L Facer Brigadier J A C G Eyre

SUBJECT

MILITARY ISSUES

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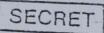
MILITARY ISSUES

and a letter of 10 June from the private secretary to the Defence Secretary to the private secretary to the Prime Minister on the supply of French Super Etendard aircraft to Peru.

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

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL said that he had been asked to advise on the legal implications of intercepting Argentine cargo aircraft believed to be carrying arms from Libya. An aircraft flying direct from Tripoli to Recife in Brazil without refuelling could not be intercepted and forced to divert to Ascension because it would have insufficient fuel. But a warning could be given to Argentina that future flights were liable to be intercepted and if necessary attacked. An aircraft which had refuelled en route could be asked to divert: if it refused, it could be given an immediate warning and, if it again refused, attacked.

THE PRIME MINISTER, summing up the discussion, said urgent enquiries should be made of the French Government about the report of arrangements being made to supply Super Etendard aircraft to Peru which were believed to be destined for Argentina. For operational reasons the total number of casualties incurred through the Argentine air attacks on ships off Bluff Cove and Fitzroy should not at present be revealed. The Ministry of Defence would announce the following day that all next-of-kin had been President Reagan and Mr Haig had indicated that the United States would be ready to help with the repatriation of Argentine prisoners of war likely to be captured in the taking of Port Stanley. It was for later decision whether some or all of them should be retained until the end of hostilities with Argentina. Now that the Brazilian Government had agreed to permit the return of the RAF Vulcan from Rio de Janeiro the supply of spare parts for the Brazilian Lynx helicopters could be resumed: no publicity should, however, be given.



She would consider asking Prince Saud whether the Saudis would be willing to intervene with Iraq to prevent the supply of Iraqi Exocet missiles to Argentina and with the King of Morocco to prevent overflights of Argentine aircraft carrying military supplies from Libya.

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The Sub-Committee -

- 1. Invited the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of the Cabinet, to make urgent representations to the French Government to prevent the supply of Super Etendard aircraft to Peru.
- 2. Invited the Defence Secretary to arrange for the supply of spare parts for the Brazilian Lynx helicopters to be resumed.

3.

Cabinet Office

11 June 1982