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OD(SA)(82) 11th Meeting

COPY NO **16**

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  
TUESDAY 20 APRIL 1982 at 12 noon

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

Admiral of the Fleet  
Sir Terence Lewin  
Chief of the Defence Staff

Admiral Sir Henry Leach  
Chief of Naval Staff

Sir Antony Acland  
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

**SECRET**

## SITUATION IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC

Previous Reference: OD(SA)(82) 10th Meeting

THE PRIME MINISTER, summing up the discussion, said that a satisfactory reply had been received from the United States Secretary of State, Mr Haig, to the message sent by the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary the previous evening. In accordance with the suggestion now made by Mr Haig the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, who was in Brussels that morning to brief his European Community colleagues, would visit Washington on 22-23 April. He would be discussing with Mr Haig British counter-proposals on the draft agreement and how these should be negotiated with the Argentines. She would announce this visit in Parliament that afternoon. Mr Haig's message, though it suggested that further military action might have adverse consequences in the Organisation of American States, also emphasised that it was imperative for Britain to maintain military pressure. In these circumstances it seemed reasonable that Operation Paraquet to repossess South Georgia should proceed as planned, unless the Sub-Committee decided otherwise when they met again later that day after the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary's return from Brussels. In the meantime the views of Her Majesty's Ambassador in Washington should be sought in the strictest confidence. The Defence Secretary had rightly sent the following further instructions to the Commanding Officer.

While not overriding the primacy of military considerations and safety of our own forces, the Force Commander should know that the political needs of the present situation would best be served by a quick clean operation with maximum prisoners and minimum dead. If it comes to a conflict of priorities speed is secondary.

The Sub-Committee -

1. Took note that the Prime Minister would inform Parliament of the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary's impending visit to Washington.
2. Agreed to resume their discussion at 1830 that evening.

Cabinet Office

21 April 1982

**SECRET**

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OD(SA)(82) 12th Meeting

COPY NO 16

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 TUESDAY 20 APRIL 1982 at 6.30 pm

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

Admiral Sir Henry Leach Chief of Naval Staff

Sir Antony Acland 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

**SECRET**

## SITUATION IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC

Previous Reference: OD(SA)(82) 11th Meeting

THE PRIME MINISTER, summing up the discussion, said that Her Majesty's Ambassador in Washington had been consulted in strict confidence about the implementation of Operation Paraquet for the repossession of South Georgia. He had reported that it was unlikely to be opposed by American public or Congressional opinion or by the United States Government, although the Secretary of State, Mr Haig, might feel it necessary to express concern at the further resort to force while talks were proceeding. There appeared to be no grounds for the Sub-Committee altering their earlier decision that the Operation should go ahead, with the first reconnaissance landing being made at about 0600 GMT on 21 April. It was understood that this decision would now become irreversible, although it might still be several days before the main Operation was actually carried out. Her Majesty's Ambassador in Washington had strongly urged that Mr Haig should be given advance warning of the Operation. This should be done as soon as possible after his office opened for business on 21 April. Since this would not be before 1200 GMT, there would be no possibility of suspending action at that stage. But Mr Haig should not be given details of the time factors involved, since these were unpredictable and would depend on decisions by the local commander. The Sub-Committee would meet the following day, in the Defence Secretary's unavoidable absence, to consider counter-proposals on the draft Anglo-Argentine agreement which the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary might make when he saw Mr Haig in Washington on 22 April. At the Defence Secretary's suggestion, early arrangements should also be made for the Sub-Committee to be given a further detailed appreciation of the general military situation and prospects.

The Sub-Committee -

1. Invited the Defence Secretary to put into effect Operation Paraquet for the early repossession of South Georgia.
2. Invited the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary to arrange for Mr Haig to be informed about Operation Paraquet early in working hours (Washington time) on 21 April.

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3. Agreed to resume their discussion at 0930 on 21 April.
4. Invited the Defence Secretary to arrange for the Chiefs of Staff to give the members of the Sub-Committee at 0900 on 22 April an appreciation of the military situation and prospects.

Cabinet Office

21 April 1982

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