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MAY01 – SCSA NOTE – REINFORCEMENT: REQUISITIONING OF SHIPS (cab 148/212)

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OD(SA)(82) 40

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1 May 1982

CABINET

DEFENCE AND OVERSEA POLICY COMMITTEE

SUB-COMMITTEE ON THE SOUTH ATLANTIC AND
THE FALKLAND ISLANDS

REINFORCEMENT: REQUISITIONING OF SHIPS

Note by the Secretaries

The attached note by the Ministry of Defence is circulated for consideration by the Sub-Committee at their meeting on Sunday, 2 May.

Signed ROBERT ARMSTRONG
R L WADE-GERY
R L L FACER

Cabinet Office

1 May 1982

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Note by MOD Officials

1. OD(SA)(82)39 indicated that, if 5 Brigade and supporting elements are to be moved forward to the area of operations, it would be necessary to take up extra shipping from trade. The requirement is to move a "slimline" 5 Brigade of 2892 men, 2304 tons of ammunition and freight, 110 vehicles, 79 trailers, 19 helicopters and 6 guns. The Brigade is required to reach the Falkland Islands by 28 May.
2. An assessment by the Defence Operational Movement Staff in association with the Department of Trade shows that the only available United Kingdom shipping would be :-

<u>Ship</u>	<u>Requisitioned Not Later Than</u>	<u>Fit Out and Load</u>	<u>Sail ex UK</u>	<u>Arrive FI</u>
QE 2	4 May	5/11 May	By 13 May	28 May
NORDIC FERRY) BAL TIC FERRY)	2 May	3/8 May	9 May	28 May

The broad order of cost for requisitioning the QE 2 would be £150K per day and for the two ferries £10-15K per day.

3. No other single ships or practical grouping of ships could be made available within the required timescale. 10 June would be the earliest achievable date with alternative shipping, and even that date is of doubtful validity.
4. A study of suitable foreign flag vessels (including US) is being conducted urgently by the Department of Trade, but it is most unlikely that suitable ships will be available. Moreover, apart from the necessity to obtain diplomatic agreement, such shipping could not be requisitioned and would only be obtainable by voluntary charter. A transfer of flag would need to be considered.
5. The use of presently requisitioned shipping, released after the landing to return to Ascension Island to embark the troops of 5 Brigade, has been examined but the earliest date of return to the Falkland Islands would be mid-June.
6. A suitable ship to carry additional Harriers and helicopters is being identified and should be available within a few days. The chartering of one additional support tanker will also be necessary.

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The likely order of costs for the two ships would be £10-15K each per day.

7. Ministers are invited to agree that, if a decision is taken to deploy 5 Brigade, action to take up the necessary shipping, including the QE 2 should be set in hand at once.

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