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CABINET

DEFENCE AND OVERSEAS POLICY (OFFICIAL) COMMITTEE

SUB-COMMITTEE ON THE SOUTH ATLANTIC AND THE FALKLAND ISLANDS

INTERNATIONAL REACTION TO THE ARGENTINE INVASION
OF THE FALKLAND ISLANDS

Note by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office

1. As of midday on 3 June the situation was as follows. Foreign Ministers of Rio Treaty States, meeting in Washington at Argentina's request, adopted on 29 May by seventeen votes (the US, Trinidad, Chile and Colombia abstaining) a resolution condemning our 'unjustified and disproportionate' armed attack. The resolution called on the US to cease support for Britain and to end sanctions against Argentina. The meeting was marked by expressions of intense hostility towards the US and the Americans now appear to believe that a rapid military solution would be less damaging politically for them than protracted hostilities. There have been reports of a serious dispute between Mr Haig and the American UN representative, Mrs Kirkpatrick. Mr Haig believes Mrs Kirkpatrick's judgement is affected by her close links with Latin Americans. Mrs Kirkpatrick has reportedly suggested that the British Foreign Office is running American foreign policy. Mrs Kirkpatrick at her own request has seen President Reagan. President Reagan has kept above the storm by fresh calls for negotiations but has again publicly blamed Argentina for its initial aggression and intransigence in earlier negotiations. The US Administration has been put on the defensive by newspaper reports of the provision of side-winder missiles and other material support to Britain. President Galtieri described President Reagan's message of congratulations for Argentina's National Day as 'incomprehensible' in the circumstances.

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2. Although the Germans are basically solid in their support they are showing signs of increasing nervousness. Chancellor Schmidt has again reportedly said that German support is not a blank cheque for Britain and that Germany has a duty to impress on Britain the need for 'proportionality'. He has reportedly said that Germany's concern is still to do everything in its power to end the fighting and that it had agreed to the extension of EC sanctions only after overcoming serious inhibitions. Similar strong reservations about our actions continue to be expressed in the West German press. The Minister of State in the West German Foreign Ministry, Dr Corterier, is currently on a visit to Venezuela, Colombia and Honduras. French support continues to be stronger than German. President Mitterrand emphasised in Washington on 30 May the close ties that exist between Britain and France. He said that while the French Government had nothing against Latin America, Argentina had broken the law and placed itself in the wrong. He also said, however, that on sovereignty France had taken no position. He received the Venezuelan delegation currently in Europe led by the Venezuelan Minister for the Presidency. The French Foreign Minister, M. Cheysson told the delegation that France was against aggression and that she also supported Britain for reasons of European solidarity. Despite its failure to participate in EC sanctions Italian support continues firm. Recent Italian Foreign Ministry statements have referred to the 'armed violation of international law by the Argentine Government' and affirmed scrupulous Italian observation of the EC arms embargo on Argentina. The Italian Prime Minister has also publicly urged the new Argentine Ambassador in Rome to transmit to his authorities an urgent appeal for a greater sense of responsibility. Ireland was embarrassed by the unauthorised landing at Shannon airport of an Ecuadorean plane en route from Tel Aviv loaded with arms. The Irish Government is to protest to Ecuador about this. Mr Haughey has reiterated Ireland's neutral stance. He has told our Ambassador that the Irish submitted their draft ceasefire resolution to the Security Council to prevent a more unwelcome Panamanian resolution. (We find this explanation unconvincing) The Luxembourg Foreign Minister, Madam Flesch, has publicly referred to 'one of our close allies now fighting to uphold the rule of law in the face of armed aggression'. The Spanish appear to be emerging from their

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low-profile position. The Spanish Government has joined forces with Panama and has put forward a new ceasefire resolution in the Security Council. There have been press reports that King Juan Carlos has been in direct touch with President Reagan to ask him to intervene to bring about a peaceful settlement. The Spanish Foreign Minister has told our Ambassador in Madrid that the Spanish Government would be prepared to take part in any international administration for the Falkland Islands. He has also given us some useful information about Argentine attempts to purchase arms from third countries. We have also received assurances that the Spanish Government will deny arms not only to Argentina but to other countries in South America which might forward equipment to Argentina. The Spanish became members of NATO on 30 May.

3. The voting at the Rio Treaty Meeting was the same as that for the resolution approved on 28 April (17-O-4). Although harsh in tone the wording of the resolution fell short of Argentina's original draft. Instead of asking for the adoption of measures to combat UK "armed aggression" the resolution requested states to give Argentina the support that each judged appropriate. The Canadian observer has reported that Argentina accepted amendments to her original draft in order to secure the same support as before. Mexico, Brazil and Costa Rica insisted on significant changes. The Mexican Deputy Foreign Minister has told us that the resolution does not represent the Mexican position. Mexico is now seriously worried at the situation. The Mexican President's offer to provide facilities for a face-to-face negotiation between the Prime Minister and President Galtieri still stands. However, Mexico recognises the need to work at present through the UN Secretary General. The President of Colombia put forward on 27 May a proposal for a 5-day truce. The Colombians, whose new President takes office in August, have assured us that they will do all they can to promote a peaceful settlement but they doubt that Argentina will agree to withdraw. Brazil continues to be worried about the future stability of Argentina and the implications of this for Latin America. Venezuelan attempts to have Latin American Ambassadors withdrawn from London appears to have met

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with no response. They may be delaying the accreditation of a new British Ambassador in Caracas however. Chile is anxious about the effects on her neutrality of press speculation that she may be giving us covert military assistance (a charge made by TASS amongst others). Peru continues her peacekeeping efforts. President Belaunde has reiterated his claim that his earlier peace initiative was ended by the sinking of the Belgrano. The Chief of the Peruvian Armed Forces has reiterated armed forces' readiness to provide military assistance to Argentina whenever such a decision is reached by the civilian Government. The Foreign Minister has explained that the civilian Government is now under considerable pressure from the military to take a stronger line. The Peruvian Government denied press reports of military aid to Argentina. Latin American governments generally are unhappy at our attempt to defer a decision on the United Nations Development Programme for Argentina. They take the view that all decisions on Latin America should be taken together.

4. The Russians are continuing to show their readiness to portray the crisis as one of decolonisation and have expressed their solidarity with Argentina and with Latin America and the Third World generally. The Soviet Ambassador in Buenos Aires called on President Galtieri on 31 May and reportedly told him that the Soviet Union sympathises with Argentina's fight against British imperialism. Referring to the Sea King helicopter in Chile, TASS has accused Chile of providing military facilities for Britain.

5. On 23 May the Israeli Government issued a statement expressing deep concern at the hostilities and calling on both sides to enter into a ceasefire and to negotiate a peaceful solution to a conflict which was endangering world peace. (A deliberately ironic echo of UN and other statements on the Middle East.) Press speculation that Israel may be supplying arms to Argentina has continued. An Ecuadorean Boeing 707, held in New York, was found to have a cargo of Israeli arms (including bombs). The Israeli Government has said that the supplies were destined exclusively for Ecuador. They have repeated their assurances to us that

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no new military items have been supplied by Israel to Argentina since early in the crisis.

6. There has also been press speculation that Libya and South Africa may be involved in the supply of weapons to Argentina. Libya continues to make pro-Argentine statements and to criticise US help for us and the EC boycott. Qadhafi also sent a message to President Galtieri on Argentina's national day: the message referred to the ugly face of past colonialism. We have been told by the Libyans that Libya has no intention of supplying arms to Argentina. We are highly sceptical about this. A Brazilian newspaper has reported that two Boeing 707s left Tripoli on 31 May for Buenos Aires with a large cargo of arms. Qadhafi himself is reported to have said privately that Libya has no ill intentions towards Britain. The South Africans have denied providing Argentina with any missiles or aeroplane parts, as has been reported in the press, either before or during the present crisis. They have also said that no similar material has been supplied during the same period to any other South American country. While this assurance is welcome it falls far short of a complete denial of such reports. Mr P W Botha has reiterated South Africa's neutral stance.

7. Non-Aligned Foreign Ministers are currently meeting in Havana in preparation for the Non-Aligned summit in Baghdad in September. Cuba and other supporters of Argentina are likely to ask the meeting to endorse the Argentine position. Such an endorsement could have an impact on future debates at the UN. Not all Non-Aligned states will support Argentina. The Yugoslavs say the situation is now more complicated than when SCR 502 was agreed but Commonwealth countries may wish to be helpful to us, (especially Commonwealth countries in Africa and the Caribbean). They will be under strong pressure to endorse traditional non-aligned support for Argentina, however.

THE MEDIA IN VARIOUS COUNTRIES

8. The American press continues to articulate US concerns about the long-term consequences of the crisis. The Baltimore Sun has drawn attention to the consequences for the US position in Latin America and argues that it will be dangerous if the Argentinians are left humiliated /and

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and determined to seek revenge. The Washington Post in a strong editorial has said that the Prime Minister does not show the slightest readiness to stand up to her public opinion and say that the long term British interest would be better served by a negotiated settlement. The paper also referred to surprising British indifference to "the costs they expect their friends to bear". The American press has given prominent coverage to US military assistance to us, in particular the supply of side-winder missiles. The German press continue to be generally unsympathetic and apprehensive. This week's 'Der Spiegel' suggests that the Federal German Cabinet feel that the damage Britain and the NATO partners will suffer as a result of the Falklands war will be greater than the short-term advantage of Western solidarity. The French press, including the Socialist press, continue to be factual and reasonably objective. According to one Swiss newspaper 59% of the Swiss feel that the Falkland Islands belong to us. The Mexican press have described the OAS resolution as an Argentine diplomatic success but the impression given is that the significance of the resolution is very limited and there has been virtually no comment on the Mexican decision to vote for it. The South African press has given prominence to reports of arms deliveries to Argentina by South Africa. An editorial in the Yugoslav 'Politika' diverges sharply from the balanced approach taken so far by the Yugoslav media. It describes the dispute as "an unnecessary war with no real justification, reason or purpose"...."a test of dignity and honour". There has been comment from the Communist bloc. One Romanian newspaper has called for an immediate halt to the fighting and return to the search for a negotiated settlement, and supports the view that Argentina has a valid claim to the Falklands. The Albanian Communist Party daily newspaper has said that no matter how the the military conflict ends we will be the loser. A newspaper in Nepal, of limited circulation, has claimed that "Ghurka troops are losing their lives in imperialist interests".