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SAPU(82) 30

SOUTH ATLANTIC PRESENTATION UNIT (SAPU)

Attached are notes on the main military and diplomatic developments during the Parliamentary Recess.

Cabinet Office

7 June 1982

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MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

1. BATTLE FOR DARWIN AND GOOSE GREEN

2 Battalion the Parachute Regiment launched their attack on Darwin and Goose Green on 28 May. A fierce battle lasted all day during which the CO of the battalion, Lt Col H Jones, was killed in a successful attack on two Argentine heavy machine guns. The Argentine defenders finally surrendered on the morning of 29 May after first releasing 112 Falkland Islanders who had been confined for almost 30 days in the recreation centre at Goose Green. About 1,400 prisoners were taken and large amounts of arms and equipment were also captured. Argentine casualties are estimated to have been 250 killed and 120 wounded. British casualties were 17 killed and 34 wounded. Subsequently a further 200 Argentines have walked in and surrendered.

2. SUBSEQUENT MILITARY ACTION

British forces also secured Douglas Settlement and Teal Inlet to the NW of Port Stanley before moving forward to secure advance positions on Mt Kent and other areas of high ground overlooking Port Stanley. During these operations there were several successful skirmishes with Argentine troops and a number of prisoners were taken. Subsequently we have continued our preparations for retaking Port Stanley, consolidating the positions already taken and moving forward more men and equipment. 5 Infantry Brigade has now been landed on the Island to reinforce 3 Commando Brigade which made the initial landing. Although the Land Forces Commander has made it clear that the main attack on Stanley will only begin when all these preparations are complete - "I don't want us dashing in there causing unnecessary loss of life of my soldiers We will do it in a proper, sensible, well balanced military way" - we have continued to step up the pressure on the Argentines with probing patrols, Harrier ground attack operations and bombardment of Argentine positions by both shore based artillery and naval gunfire.

3. POWs/CASUALTIES

Argentine prisoners taken when the spy ship Narwal was captured were last week taken to Montevideo in Uruguay for repatriation by the hospital ship HMS Hecla along with some British casualties who were flown back to Britain by VC 10. More British casualties are now on the way home after being landed in Montevideo by HMS Hydra. The Argentine hospital ship Bahia Paraiso was allowed to take off Argentine wounded from Port Stanley after being searched by a naval boarding party in accordance with the

Geneva Convention. Subsequently 140 Argentine casualties were transferred to the Bahia Paraiso from the British hospital ship Uganda. Arrangements are also in hand for the repatriation of prisoners captured at Darwin and Goose Green.

4. OTHER MILITARY ITEMS

During the past ten days there have been a number of other military events worthy of mention -

- An unsuccessful attack on a British tanker outside the TEZ by an Argentine Hercules which dropped bombs from its cargo door.
- An unsuccessful attack on HMS Invincible on 30 May by Argentine Super Etendard aircraft equipped with Exocet.
- A number of largely ineffectual high level bombing raids by Argentine aircraft on British troops on East Falkland.
- On 1 June an accident involving explosives at Goose Green killed 5 Argentine prisoners and injured 7 more. There were no British casualties. A Board of Inquiry has been set up in accordance with the Geneva Convention.
- Press reports following the capture of Goose Green claimed that the Argentines had planned to use napalm against British troops and might have actually done so in one (unsuccessful) attack during the battle. This has not been confirmed although aircraft tanks and bombs which could have been used for napalm were captured at Goose Green. The use of napalm is not illegal at present although its use would be banned by a 1977 Protocol signed by Britain (but not by Argentina) which is not yet in force. British forces in the South Atlantic do not have napalm.
- The Australian Prime Minister, Mr Fraser, has informed us that, while Australia is still keen to purchase HMS Invincible, they would not hold us to the sale if as a result of the Falklands operation we wished to retain the ship. The Prime Minister has thanked Mr Fraser for his generous offer and said that we will make a rapid decision as soon as the situation in the Falklands permits.

- On 4 June an RAF Vulcan was allowed to make an emergency landing in Brazil after running short of fuel.

- The QE2 is returning to Britain with survivors from LMS Coventry, Ardent and Antelope. When she returns she will have completed her mission and will be handed back to her owners, Cunard.

/DIPLOMATIC DEVELOPMENTS

DIPLOMATIC DEVELOPMENTS1. UN SECURITY COUNCIL DRAFT RESOLUTION

The draft resolution which we vetoed on 4 June was unacceptable because it failed to establish an explicit link between a ceasefire and Argentine withdrawal. Since Argentina was responsible for the initial act of aggression and has persistently refused to withdraw its troops voluntarily as required by Resolution 502, we would only be willing to agree to a ceasefire if it were irrevocably linked to the immediate withdrawal of all Argentine forces within a fixed period. The draft resolution set no deadline for the completion of withdrawal. If adopted the draft resolution would have allowed Argentina to lead us back into the morass of procrastination and evasion to which we have become accustomed over the last two months of intensive negotiations, while tying our own hands by the call in paragraph 1 of the draft resolution for a ceasefire. The draft resolution only just obtained the minimum number (9) of positive votes which would have secured its adoption were it not for use of the veto. Three non-aligned countries abstained. (Sir Anthony Parsons' statement earlier in the Security Council debate was circulated as SAPU (29) on 3 June).

2. UN SECRETARY-GENERAL'S GOOD OFFICES MISSION

The Secretary-General of the United Nations had reported to the Security Council on 2 June on the mission of "good offices" which he had been undertaking in accordance with Security Council Resolution 505. He said that the positions of Britain and Argentina did not offer the possibility of developing at that time a mutually acceptable ceasefire. He would nevertheless maintain close contact with the parties in the hope that his good offices might contribute in bringing the crisis to an end.

3. VERSAILLES SUMMIT MEETING

At the Western Economic Summit at Versailles we had valuable discussions about the situation in the Falklands. The Summit countries all agreed that the situation had been brought about by Argentina's aggression, and condemned her recourse to violence rather than the rule of law. They expressed their complete solidarity with us, as the victim of aggression, and confirmed that we must recover what we had lost.

4. RIO TREATY MEETING

Signatories of the Rio Treaty met in Washington on 27-29 May, and adopted a resolution which condemned the United Kingdom, called on the United States to cease support for Britain and its sanctions against Argentina, and invited each member state to support Argentina as it judged appropriate, either individually or on a co-ordinated basis. We nevertheless understand that the terms of the resolution as adopted were significantly less favourable to Argentina's position than the draft which Argentina herself originally proposed. The United States, Trinidad and Tobago, Chile and Colombia abstained on the resolution.

5. NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT

The Co-ordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement met in Havana from 31 May to 5 June. It adopted a resolution regarding the Falkland Islands which, supported Argentina's claim to sovereignty over the Islands. This was only to be expected but the resolution noticeably failed to give full support to Argentina's military activities in pursuit of its claim.

6. LIEUTENANT COMMANDER ASTIZ

Lieutenant Commander Astiz arrived in the United Kingdom on 5 June and is being held in secure accommodation which satisfies the conditions of the Geneva Conventions, at the Royal Military Police Depot at Chichester Keep. We have agreed to put certain questions to him on behalf of the Governments of France and Sweden. After that he will be repatriated.

7. UP-DATING OF SHACKLETON REPORT

The Prime Minister asked Lord Shackleton to up-date his 'Economic Survey of the Falkland Islands' produced in 1976. He has reassembled almost all of his original team, and hopes to report within about a month. He and his team will evaluate the overall resource development potential of the Islands, and assess their future economic viability.