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WITH
THE COMPLIMENTS OF THE
PRIVATE SECRETARY

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE, WHITEHALL

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Draft Statement by John Nott
to H/C 10/6/82

Since I reported to the House on 26 May British forces have moved forward to positions surrounding Port Stanley and are in firm control of high ground on an arc surrounding the town.

Earlier on 29th May 2 Battalion the Parachute Regiment supported by units from the Royal Marines, Royal Artillery and the Royal Engineers captured Darwin and Goose Green. This action against a greatly superior force was a remarkable feat and our forces displayed great determination, valour and fighting skill. At the same time units of 3 Commando Brigade liberated the settlements at Teal and Douglas. Whilst these actions were in process 5 Infantry Brigade came ashore without incident and the QE2, which carried them is due back in Southampton tomorrow.

In order to move forward elements of 5 Infantry Brigade as rapidly as possible to the Port Stanley area and given the appalling weather which was making the logistic problems difficult for helicopters, the Force Commander moved some forces with heavy stores and equipment around the coast by landing ships.

~~When the weather cleared on 8th June all but the last elements had moved forward successfully.~~ But the sea movement coincided with better weather and the Argentines at this time renewed their air attacks on our forces. Our latest assessment is that during these attacks at least 7 Argentine aircraft were destroyed and maybe another 4 making 11 in all.

One air attack was launched against the 2 landing ships logistic SIR GALAHAD and SIR TRISTRAM. Both ships were hit. The SIR TRISTRAM had virtually completed off loading and she was not severely damaged. The SIR GALAHAD had already started unloading but still had some men embarked.

The House will be anxious to know our latest assessment of casualties, but I must emphasise the very great difficulty which we often experience in assessing the extent of damage and the numbers involved. Casualties are often taken in the thick of hostilities to various places on land and to several ships of the Fleet where the units concerned are involved in battle conditions often in difficulty and danger with the limiting effect this has on communications.

Having consulted the military authorities I am not prepared at this stage to give the total numbers of our casualties and indeed to do so could be of assistance to the enemy and put our own men at greater risk. Meanwhile next of kin are being informed and I will say more as soon as possible.

Does not seem to have said this part

In another incident Argentine aircraft attacked a small landing craft. 4 Royal Marines and 2 Naval personnel were killed; their next of kin are being informed. In this incident all 4 attacking Mirage aircraft were intercepted by our Sea Harriers and were shot down.

HMS PLYMOUTH sustained an attack on the other side of East Falkland, in the Sound. 5 Royal Naval personnel were injured and their next of kin have been informed. The ship was damaged but she remains operational.

The losses which we have sustained in these incidents are tragic ones and as soon as we can give further information to the families we will do so. I would like to express my tribute to the bravery and skill of those who were involved in the rescue of our men, particularly the helicopter pilots and crews who in extremely hazardous conditions were responsible for saving a great many lives by removing men from the damaged ships.

I must tell the House that the Task Force Commander's plans have not been prejudiced by these attacks and the losses of stores and equipment are already being made good from other stocks held ashore.