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OD(SA)(82) 25th Meeting

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CABINET

DEFENCE AND OVERSEA POLICY COMMITTEE
SUB-COMMITTEE ON THE SOUTH ATLANTIC AND
THE FALKLAND ISLANDS

 MINUTES of a Meeting held in the
Prime Minister's Room,
House of Commons, on
TUESDAY 4 MAY 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
(Item 1)

 The Rt Hon Cecil Parkinson MP
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster
and Paymaster General

THE FOLLOWING WERE ALSO PRESENT

 The Rt Hon Sir Michael Havers QC MP
Attorney General (Item 1)

 Admiral Sir Henry Leach
Chief of Naval Staff and
First Sea Lord (Item 1)

 Sir Antony Acland
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

 Mr J R Freeland
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
(Item 1)

 Sir Michael Palliser
Cabinet Office

SECRETARIAT

 Sir Robert Armstrong
Mr R L Wade-Gery
Mr R L L Facer

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1. MILITARY ISSUES

The Sub-Committee were informed of the latest military situation.

THE PRIME MINISTER, summing up the discussion, said that it was very unwelcome news that a Harrier aircraft had been lost in action over the Falklands and that HMS Sheffield had been hit by an air-launched Exocet missile and set on fire. A difficult problem was posed by the possibility that the Argentine aircraft carrier had been located by a British submarine in a vulnerable position off the coast of Argentina, since it might be situated outside what Britain would recognise as territorial waters but in a bay which the Argentines claimed was inside the territorial waters baseline. She would arrange for this problem to be considered by the Defence and Overseas Policy Committee later that evening, when the Attorney General had had time to consider the legal position more fully.

The Sub-Committee -
Took note.

2. DIPLOMATIC ISSUES

The Sub-Committee had before them a letter of 4 May to the Prime Minister's Private Secretary from the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary's on ideas for a new diplomatic move.

THE FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH SECRETARY said that he wished to send to the United States Secretary of State, Mr Haig, the message and draft agreement suggested in his Private Secretary's letter. This was necessary in order to fill the diplomatic vacuum identified by the Sub-Committee at their previous meeting. The draft agreement was an adaptation of the United States/Peruvian proposals he had then mentioned.

THE PRIME MINISTER, summing up the discussion, said that the terms of the proposed approach to Mr Haig were approved subject to one change. Paragraph 5 of the draft agreement should be amended to read:

The two Governments agree that the views of the Islanders must be determined, and that their interests and wishes must be respected in the definitive settlement of the status of the Islands.

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Paragraph 2b of the draft agreement could be omitted if that were suggested at a later stage.

The Sub-Committee -

Invited the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary to communicate with Mr Haig in the terms he had proposed, subject to the amendment indicated by the Prime Minister in her summing up.

Cabinet Office

5 May 1982

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