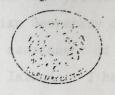
CONFIDENTIAL Covering TOP SECRET



Copy to:

PS/Minister(AF) PS/US of S(AF) PSO/CDS PS/PUS

DUS(Navy)
ACNS(O)
AUS(D Staff)

AUS(NS) DNOT Head of

Head of DS5 Head of DS11

acos (POL)

Sec 1SL

MO 5/21

FALKLAND ISLANDS

Following the discussion which 1SL attended this morning I now attach a copy of a signal which the Secretary of State has sent to the Prime Minister in Brussels.

whitem

29th March 1982

(N H R EVANS) APS/S of S

Covering TOP SECRET CONFIDENTIAL

Lufy NO 13 J. 13

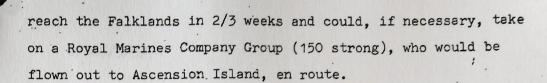
SIGNAL TO THE PRIME MINISTER FROM SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DEFENCE

I heard this morning that you had discussed the Falklands situation with the Foreign Secretary on your journey to Brussels. You asked for an urgent assessment of possible options for deployment of naval vessels to the Islands. I had already set contingency planning in hand over the weekend and a number of steps have been taken.

First, as Endurance may be required to remain at South Georgia for the foreseeable future and will begin to run short of food and other supplies in three weeks, the RFA Fort Austin has today sailed from Gibraltar to replenish Endurance. She will also be capable of providing support to other ships should they have to be sent to the area.

Secondly, I have today instructed that the nuclear submarine (SSN) HMS Spartan should be sailed covertly to the South Atlantic. She has been taken off exercises in the vicinity of Gibraltar and will proceed there to stock up with suitable weapons and provisions. She will sail from Gibraltar early on 31st March and should be in the vicinity of the Falklands by 13th April. This is the quickest available means of deploying an SSN, suitably equipped, to the area. We are planning on the basis that a second SSN will be earmarked.

A further possibility will be to divert to the South Atlantic seven destroyers/frigates currently participating in exercises off Gibraltar. They are due to leave for the UK on 1st April and their diversion would not become apparent before 5th April. There is time to take a decision on this later in the week. The ships could



This Group would not in itself constitute a viable full strength task group. For this we would need at least a CVS, several escort vessels and a Royal Marines Commando Group (800 strong). Such a Force could be assembled in about a week and would take a further three to reach the Falklands. It would, of course, become immediately apparent that we were putting together such a group.

a pers service out the coretain corresponding for the profit or agent or agent

there pathy her core prama facts preservational advertise in

Although, therefore