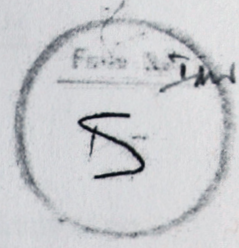


COS(Misc) 90/742/1

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FALKLAND ISLANDS - MILITARY APPRECIATION

1. In accordance with the instructions (1) of the Chiefs of Staff, an amended Military Appreciation is attached.

2. Unless the Secretary, Chiefs of Staff Committee hears to the contrary by telephone (Ext 6575) by 1700 on Wednesday 7 April 1982 it will be assumed that your Principals have agreed the paper.

Attachment:

Military Appreciation (7 pages)
(No copies to be made without reference to SECCOS).

Note:

- 1. COS 7th Mtg/82, Item 4.

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6 April 1982

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FALKLAND ISLANDS: MILITARY APPRECIATION

1. The aim of military operations in the current situation is seen to be to bring about the withdrawal of Argentine forces from the Falkland Islands, and the re-establishment of British administration there, as quickly as possible and with minimal loss of life among the Falkland Islanders.

Options - Declaration of an exclusion zone around the Falklands, which might extend to 200 miles.

2. In this zone, Argentine warships, military support vessels and commercial shipping resupplying the Falklands would be sunk without warning.

a. Between Approximately 11 and 29 April such operations could be undertaken by the SSNs alone.

Military Pros

- CNS
- (1) Inflicts attrition on Argentine fleet.
 - (2) SSNs would be extremely effective in this role and relatively invulnerable to counter-attack from Argentine forces;
 - (3) Such operations would severely inhibit the Sea Lines of Communication (SLOC) from the Argentine mainland to the garrison on the Falklands.

Political Pros

- CNS
- (1) Action can begin on 11 April;
 - (2) Military action clearly related to political aim and therefore likely to attract international support initially;
 - (3) Withdrawal of the Argentine fleet from the zone would be a humiliating concession for them.
 - (4) Powerful negotiating card.

Military Cons

- (1) It would be necessary to declare the zone, and to give a period during which shipping could withdraw. The Argentine Navy might do so, and thus frustrate efforts to sink its warships;

(2) If operations are restricted to warships, the SLOCs to the Falklands would not be cut, and in any event re-supply by air would be unrestricted.

CAS

(3) With the SSNs alone, it would be impracticable to identify and turn back merchant shipping in the zone.

Political Cons

(1) Any accidental attack on neutral merchant shipping would rapidly erode international support for our position;

CAS

(2) An attack on any non-naval vessel, [naval or civil,] would be likely to attract widespread criticism, particularly in the UN. Freedom to conduct further operations could therefore be politically inhibited.

b. From approx 29 April When the Task Group had arrived, the policing of an exclusion zone could be much more effectively conducted.

Military Pros

(1) Operations could be extended to interdict air re-supply of the Falklands;

(2) The Task Group could quickly establish sea control, and seek to establish air superiority.

(3) Once such control was established, merchant shipping could be intercepted, and turned back;

(4) Necessary condition is established for a major amphibious assault on the Falkland Islands.

CNS

(5) Major effect on morale of occupying forces.

Political Pros

(1) Exclusion zone would be policed with complete effectiveness.

Military Cons

(1) No certainty of being able to engage Argentine navy, if its warships avoided zone;

(2) It follows that Argentine navy might survive crisis to threaten our position whatever diplomatic or military result is achieved;

(3) It might be necessary to continue this operation for a considerable period before, by itself, it could hope to bring about an Argentine

withdrawal, and this would pose very difficult logistic problems.

Political Cons

(1) Similarly, political success could take some time to achieve. Meanwhile, international support for our position might be eroding.

General Options Against the Argentine Navy

3. Our naval forces could be employed to seek out and destroy Argentine warships wherever they are at sea. These operations could be begun with or without an ultimatum giving warning of our intention.

a. Between approx 11 and 29 April such operations could be undertaken by the SSNs alone.

Military Pros

- (1) Provided they have MPA support, SSNs would be extremely effective against Argentine warships and relatively invulnerable to counter-attack;
- (2) Such operations would inhibit to some extent the reinforcement and re-supply of the Falkland Islands.
- (3) Assuming a degree of success, would make it easier to hold the Falkland Islands subsequently.

Political Pros

- (1) Early action;
- (2) Engaging military targets only;
- (3) Sinking of one or two major Argentine warships would be dramatic demonstration of our naval capability and would be a major blow to Argentinian Government.
- (4) Powerful negotiating card.

Military Cons

- (1) Argentine warships could withdraw to ports, or to shallow water where SSN operations are constrained.
- (2) No effect on air re-supply of Falklands.

Political Cons

(1) International reactions to the first engagement could be so strong as to inhibit further engagements, and if only a few ships had been sunk, the objective of disabling the Argentine navy would not have been achieved.

Para 4
continued
Page

b. After Approx 29 April After the Task Group had arrived; operations could be effected with considerably more effect

Military Pros

- (1) More Argentine warships could be sunk more quickly;
- (2) Air re-supply of the Falklands could be inhibited during these operations, even though it was not their prime objective;
- (3) The maritime and air superiority necessary for any successful amphibious landing on the Falklands would be very largely established.
- (4) Would make major contribution to holding the Falkland Islands following our re-occupation.

Political Pros

- (1) Sinking the major part of the Argentine fleet would be a devastating blow politically to the Argentine Government;
- (2) If the Argentine fleet were sunk, it would be much easier to maintain our position on the Islands once re-established by either diplomatic or military action.

Air Operations

CLOSED FOR 40 YEARS UNDER
FOI SECTION 27

CLOSED FOR 40 YEARS UNDER
FOI SECTION 27

Landing Operations

CDS
CAS 5. This option depends on sea and air control around the Falklands. It will be significantly affected by the success or otherwise of our earlier operations against the Falkland LOC and the Argentinian Navy. It will be significantly affected by any build-up of forces and consolidation achieved by the Argentines in the coming 2 to 3 weeks. It [will depend on] cannot be launched without good intelligence. Subject to all these, the flexibility of the amphibious force should enable a surprise landing to be conducted in a lightly defended area. The terrain would probably preclude any immediate Argentine response, and a viable bridgehead should be possible. This is unlikely to be in the vicinity of Port Stanley.

6. Another possible option is a landing operation in South Georgia. This could lead to an early success, but would dissipate our resources and delay the main operations in the vicinity of the Falkland Islands.

11 a
redact

7. The final stage would be the progressive re-occupation of the Islands - probably feasible if our sea and air control was assured [absolute], but a difficult task in the Antarctic winter and in terrain favouring the defender. The potential effect on the civilian population and infrastructure would inhibit operations. The use of helicopters for rapid response and outflanking manoeuvres would be a dominant feature. Neither the scenario or the outcome of this final phase can be predicted with certainty.

OTHER OPTIONS

8. Special Operations from SSNs. The value of operations by a Special Boat Section from a submarine are well established. They could include clandestine landing in the Falklands for reconnaissance or sabotage of important objectives or limpet mine attack against shipping in harbour. Unfortunately it needs calm weather conditions; also an SSN is ill suited to them. The gains of a special operations would have to outweigh the very real risk to the SSN.

9. Evacuation of Civilians. It might be an option to seek early evacuation of the civilian Falklands population by the Red Cross. The final phase of our operations would thus be freed from some serious problems. The Argentine Government might of course refuse, but in that case would have to bear the odium of being seen to hold the population hostage. However, our action in requesting an evacuation could be misrepresented and misunderstood publicly.

MILITARY OCCUPATION

10. Following a successful re-occupation of the Falklands, we might have to defend them against a bitter and hostile Argentine. Assuming the Argentine Navy had been largely neutralised, an initial estimate of our required force level is 2 frigates or destroyers, an Infantry Battalion equivalent, Rapier Anti-Air Defences, 4-6 Harrier a/c (Sea or GR3), six to eight support Helos, and supporting elements. The Falkland Islands population would virtually be doubled. The runway and facilities at Port Stanley airfield would need to be upgraded. If the Argentine withdrawal had taken place with their sea and air forces largely intact, the force levels required would be much greater.

CONCLUSION

CAS

CNS
CNS

CLOSED FOR 40 YEARS UNDER
FOI SECTION 27

b. Good intelligence, particularly of Argentine strength in the Falkland Islands.

c. Establishing a favourable air and sea situation in which it is possible to sustain our reoccupation of the Falkland Islands.

[Faint, mostly illegible text follows, appearing to be a memorandum or report. Some legible fragments include:]

... THE ORIGINAL LANDING GROUP ...

... THE CARRIER ...

... THE LST ...

... THE ...