



Copy to:

PSO/CDS  
 Sec/CNS  
 PS/CAS  
 DMO  
 DASD  
 AUS(D Staff)  
 Head of DS 6  
 Head of DS 11  
 SECCOS

MO 5/21.

MA/CGSOPERATION CORPORATE: GURKHA INVOLVEMENT *AOA*

The Secretary of State has seen your minute of 7th April and had a short discussion this afternoon with CGS about it. The Secretary of State explained that he was the last person to want to place unnecessary restrictions on the use of the Brigade of Gurkhas which he regarded as an integral part of the British Army. Nevertheless, there were clear difficulties in agreeing to their use in the Falklands and he would need to be convinced that such a deployment was the right thing in all the circumstances of the time that any such decision had to be taken. In any case there was a more immediate concern which was that, given the delicate state of the Falklands question over the next 10 days or so, nothing should be done which carried the slightest risk of upsetting world opinion, particularly in the non-aligned countries. Any hint or suggestion that Gurkhas might be involved in operations in the area might have such an effect. There were certainly no intention of removing the Gurkhas from 5 Brigade nor of excluding them from the collective training which was planned. But the Secretary of State was most anxious to stipulate that no opportunity for speculation about Gurkha involvement in the Falklands should be given. CGS agreed to take account of the Secretary of State's views.

*NHR Evans*

15th April 1982

(N H R EVANS)  
 APS/S of S

LOOSE MINUTE

41-4-1

PS/SofS

Copy to:

- PSO/CDS
- Sec/CNS
- PS/CAS
- DMO
- DASD
- AUS(D Staff)
- Hd of DS 6
- Hd of DS 11
- SECCOS

OPERATION CORPORATE - GURKHA INVOLVEMENT

Reference:

A. FCO letter dated 5 Apr 82.

1. CGS wishes SofS to know that he is in fundamental disagreement with Stephen Lamport's note (of 5 Apr), putting forward a view about the use of Gurkhas as part of 5 Infantry Brigade, their parent formation.
2. Whilst CGS feels that, at present, the likelihood of 5 Brigade (the follow up force) becoming involved in Operation CORPORATE is small, he believes that it would be a great psychological error to remove the Gurkhas from their normal fighting formation; their retention in which has been agreed by the Chiefs of Staff. To his knowledge, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office have raised this sort of objection in every case where Gurkha involvement has been proposed such as Cyprus and Belize. In both cases their view has eventually been discarded and the ultimate results have been entirely successful.
3. CGS would be grateful if, should there be any question of the Gurkhas being withdrawn from 5 Brigade, he could discuss the issue with SofS.

*Messha (R)*

7 Apr 82

M J D WALKER  
 Lt Col  
 MA to CGS  
 Ext 7114 Room 6198  
 Main Building

Zindary  
308

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

5 April 1982

5/21

D B Omand Esq  
Private Secretary to the  
Secretary of State for Defence  
Ministry of Defence  
Main Building  
Whitehall  
London SW1A 2HB

Dear David,

At yesterday's Chiefs of Staff meeting, Mr Wright was asked to give the FCO view on the use of gurkhas on Operation Corporate. We have since told MOD officials that we share your Secretary of State's reservations on this point. Our doubts arise more from presentational than legal considerations. Although gurkhas do not fall within the current UN definition of the term 'mercenary', there would almost certainly be criticism of the UK by the third world for using them in what would be perceived as a 'colonial' problem. Furthermore, the Nepalese Government have a view of decolonisation which is unfavourable from our point of view. We do not want to put recruitment at risk.

2. Mr Hurd has seen and approved the contents of this letter.

Yours ever,

S M J Lamport  
Private Secretary to Mr Hurd