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*Argentina*

SAPU(82) 6

SOUTH ATLANTIC PRESENTATION UNIT (SAPU)

1. The attached paper was issued at 1815 hours on 21 April 1982 and suggests lines to take on the following subjects -

- a. Current negotiations
- b. Suggestions of a possible role for the UN
- c. British casualties in Argentine invasions
- d. Criticism of naval policy after 1981 defence review
- e. OAS invocation of the Rio Treaty
- f. Speculation about imminent invasion of South Georgia

2. SAPU(82) 1 also contained an item on allegations that the Royal Navy had been weakened and some of that material is repeated in this paper. However, there is also additional material to refute charges made by Keith Speed MP (and contained in yesterday's Evening Standard) and in a letter sent by Portsmouth dockyard union representatives to all MPs (dated 6 April) that due to dockyard closures and shipbuilding plans the Navy could not mount a similar operation in a few years time.

Cabinet Office

21 April 1982

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### Current Negotiations

1. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary is travelling to Washington tomorrow to discuss with Mr Haig our reactions to the latest Argentine proposals.

As Mr Pym said in the House of Commons today any negotiation which is to be concluded satisfactorily must deal with such critical points as: the arrangements for Argentine withdrawal; the nature of any interim administration of the Islands; and the framework for the negotiations on the long term solution to the dispute for which Security Council Resolution 502 calls. The latest Argentine proposals—despite Mr Haig's efforts — still failed to satisfy our essential requirements in certain important respects relating to these points. They reflect continuing efforts by Argentina to establish by her aggression and her defiance of the United Nations what could not be established by peaceful means.

Mr Pym will discuss ideas of our own when he meets Mr Haig.

International support for our position continues. European Community foreign ministers yesterday reconfirmed their support, emphasising the importance of securing the implementation of SCR 502, their hope for a peaceful solution and their gratitude to Mr Haig.

Will we use force?

— We are making every endeavour to achieve a peaceful settlement but the use of force cannot be ruled out.

### The United Nations' role

2. The first thing we did was go to the Security Council. Repeat that we should not now risk crossing wires while we are still involved in negotiations, through Mr Haig, in seeking a solution on the basis of Security Council Resolution 502.

A role for the Secretary General of the UN?

- Not to be excluded at some future stage. In present circumstances it is difficult to see how Senor Perez de Cuellar could expect to exert more influence or "leverage" than the United States Secretary of State. Any diplomatic activities by the Secretary General would be subject to scrutiny by the Security Council (where the Russians could be expected to make difficulties) and, on sovereignty issues, could be circumscribed by wholly unacceptable General Assembly resolutions.

Invite the UN to play a role in deciding the sovereignty issues?

- The General Assembly's record on this has been discouraging. They have insisted on classifying the Falklands as a decolonization issue, supporting the Argentine claim to sovereignty, and ignoring the fundamental rights of the Falkland Islanders to self determination. Successive General Assembly resolutions have ignored the plain fact that it is the Argentines who are the colonialists in seeking to subject an established population to an alien rule against its clearly expressed wishes. The UN's attitude is at least in part explained by the composition of its decolonization Committee (the Committee of 24) which currently includes Afghanistan, Bulgaria, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Ethiopia, Iran, Iraq, Syria and the Soviet Union as well as Latin American countries with a special interest in supporting the Argentine claims. The only western members are Australia and Norway.

UN observers/commissions?

- One of many ideas which could in certain circumstances be helpful.

### British casualties during the Argentine invasions

3. Argentines have tried to give impression that they deliberately avoided inflicting British casualties during invasion of Falklands and South Georgia. This is not so; lack of serious casualties due to superior skill of British forces, good defensive positions.

Argentine intentions made quite clear by the accounts given by the Governor and returning Marines. On the Falklands the Argentine invasion began with a pre-emptive attack on the barracks - quite clear that the Marines would have suffered heavy casualties had they been there. (Sunday Times 'Insight' account based on Major Noott's story.) The Governor talked of a three and a half hour firefight at Government House - "We couldn't move outside Government House ..... every time we moved we were shot at" - which only ended after they had inflicted at least twenty casualties on the invaders and the Argentines began to bring up 30mm cannon.

Lt Mills' account yesterday makes it clear that the battle for South Georgia in which one Marine received two bullet wounds was equally severe. The Marines were under constant fire from the invading troops and were also shelled by an Argentine corvette but were in well prepared defensive positions. They surrendered only in the face of overwhelming odds after they had been completely surrounded.

### Defence review will weaken Navy?

4. The review of defence expenditure has not weakened Navy. Proof of this is the task force now approaching Falklands. Always planned to retain ability to mount operations outside NATO area - restated in the review White Paper. All elements of the present task force will continue to be available into the 1990s - two aircraft carriers (more modern than HERMES and INVINCIBLE), two assault ships; around 50 modern destroyers and frigates to draw on and even more hunter killer submarines than now. We will continue to spend more on the conventional navy (in real terms) even when Trident programme reaches its peak and there will be more major ships and submarines available in 1985 than today.

We will also retain the naval base facilities - for fuelling, storing, maintenance etc - necessary for an operation of this sort although we are running down our dockyard production and refit capacity (closure of Portsmouth/Chatham/Gibraltar dockyards). We have done away with the need for expensive mid-life modernisations and no longer need all our dockyard capacity although we are retaining the base facilities at Portsmouth and Gibraltar.

Nothing that has happened suggests that our defence policy is wrong and we will still be able to mount such operations in the future if necessary. Therefore no need for any significant changes in our plans although some details and timings are likely to be affected as a result of present operations.

#### OAS Invokes the Rio Treaty

5. The OAS has voted by 18-0 (with the United States, Colombia and Trinidad abstaining) that foreign ministers of the signatories of the Rio Treaty are to meet in Washington on Monday. This is in no way surprising. The decision does not prejudice decisions at Monday's meeting. Argentina, which is the aggressor, has no case to demand measures under the Rio Treaty, and in any event Security Council Resolution 502 takes precedence over any decision of the OAS.

#### Imminent Invasion of South Georgia?

6. Cannot divulge the disposition of our forces, but note that speculative press reports this morning appear to derive from an American newspaper story.