

Ref: B06613



Pne Munsle

PRIME MINISTER

c Sir Robert Armstrong

Dr

29/10

OD(FAF): Falklands Garrison Presentation

BACKGROUND

It was agreed at the meeting of OD(FAF) on 6th September that the Defence Secretary should arrange for the Committee to be given a presentation on the problems of garrisoning the Falkland Islands by way of background to the decisions which are needed on the size of the garrison and the proposed new airfield. The presentation has been arranged for 2.30 pm on 1st November in the Cabinet Room.

2. The Defence Secretary will be accompanied by the Chief of the Defence Staff, Field Marshal Sir Edwin Bramall, and by Sir Frank Cooper; and the presentation will be given by the Deputy Chief of Defence Staff, Lieutenant General Sir Maurice Johnston, assisted by the Deputy Chief of Defence Staff (Intelligence), Lieutenant General Sir James Glover, Air Vice Marshal Sutton and Captain Raymond. The presentation will last about half an hour and will be illustrated with viewfoils, leaving about three quarters of an hour for questions and discussion. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary will be accompanied by Mr Cranley Onslow and (in Sir Antony Acland's absence) by Sir Julian Bullard.
3. The Defence Secretary was accompanied by General Johnston on his recent visit to the Falklands. He intends to circulate a background note in advance of the presentation to serve as an aide memoire, but this is being revised in the light of his visit and is unlikely to be available until the weekend.
4. In the light of Monday's presentation and discussion, it is envisaged that the Defence Secretary will put forward firm proposals on the garrison and the airfield for consideration at a further meeting of OD(FAF), provisionally arranged for 10th November, at which the actual decisions can be taken. The two questions are intimately linked, since reinforcement capability - and hence the size of the resident garrison - depends on the size (and location) of the airfield. The total cost of a new, permanent

full-size airfield capable of taking wide-bodied jets from Ascension and of operating Phantom air defence aircraft, and including the cost of the associated buildings for defensive systems and accommodation for servicemen, is now estimated at £450 million. I understand that the Defence Secretary had already asked for cheaper options to be examined: from his remarks in Cabinet this morning it would seem that, as a result of his visit, he now favours a permanent enlargement of the existing airfield rather than the construction of a new one. The presentation will presumably cover the pros and cons of this as against other options.

HANDLING

5. Questions you might pursue during the discussion following the presentation include

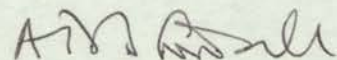
- a. Is there a minimum size of resident garrison required to deter a further Argentine invasion, irrespective of the extent to which reinforcement capability might be improved by better airfield facilities etc?
- b. How quickly could that garrison be reinforced
 - i. at present;
 - ii. as a result of the different airfield options?
- c. How relevant is the question of warning time? The latest JIC assessment (JIC(82)(IA) 193) of the Argentine threat states that "We receive little information on Argentine air force or army activities". Are there measures we could take to obtain better intelligence and consequently improved warning time?
- d. How far will the different airfield options meet the potential requirements for civil air services?
- e. Is there an upper limit to the size of the garrison beyond which it would totally overshadow the civilian population? From this point of view does it make any difference if the garrison is 2,000, 3,000 or 4,000? Would the impact of the garrison on the civil population be less if it were accommodated away from Stanley? What are the prospects (and cost) of at least part of the garrison being accompanied by wives and families?

f. What are the relative costs of the different options for both the airfield and the garrison?

g. What will be the effect on the United Kingdom's contribution to NATO?

CONCLUSION

6. Depending on the answers to these questions, you may be able to guide the discussion towards establishing the optimum mix of airfield size and garrison size in terms of deterrence/defence and cost effectiveness, so as to clear the ground for the decisions to be taken at the meeting on 10th November.



28th October 1982

A D S GOODALL