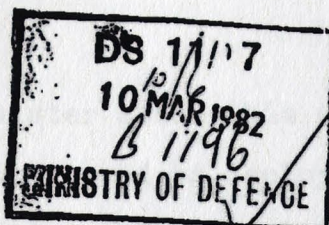


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DN Plans
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Head of DS 11 ✓

FALKLAND ISLANDS

1. You asked this morning for a short note for the Secretary of State to send to the Prime Minister indicating how quickly RN ships could be deployed to the Falkland Islands, against the background of the hardening of Argentinian attitudes.

... 2. I attach a factual draft. It does not address the practical difficulties, especially in terms of general RN - and in particular RFA - availability. Nor, of course, does it deal with other possible options, involving the other two Services, for reinforcing the Falklands.

9 March 1982

N.H. Nicholls
N H NICHOLLS
Head of DS 5

DRAFT LETTER FROM PS/S of S TO NO.10FALKLAND ISLANDS

1. The Prime Minister asked this morning for a note indicating how quickly RN ships could be deployed to the Falkland Islands.
2. The Ice Patrol vessel HMS ENDURANCE is at present operating in the region. She is currently off Adelaide Island, within 3 days sailing time from Port Stanley. She will remain in the South Atlantic until mid-April before returning to the UK. ENDURANCE carries two Wasp helicopters armed with close range missiles and is herself armed with two 20mm Oerlikon guns.
3. The West Indies guardship, HMS LONDONDERRY, is up to 3 weeks sailing time from the Falkland islands. She is, however, essentially a trials ship and carries limited close range ^{armaments} / . Moreover, she has no dedicated tanker support, so that if ports on the South American coast were denied to her she could not reach the Falklands. This consideration would also apply to the frigate ANDROMEDA currently undergoing trials in the Bahamas.
4. There are, as the Prime Minister observed, RN ships participating in the NATO Exercise SAFE PASS 82, which continues until 18 March in the Gulf of Mexico and off the Eastern Seaboard of the United States. They are the frigate HMS DANAE (part of STANAVFORLANT) and the nuclear-powered submarine HMS COURAGEOUS. Deployment of HMS DANAE to the Falklands would run into the same problems as that of HMS LONDONDERRY; although a tanker is in attendance it is servicing STANAVFORLANT as a whole and is in any case not a British vessel.
5. In short, if a frigate were to be deployed to the Falklands, RFA support would also be necessary. Passage time whether from the Caribbean or the UK would be in the order of 20 days. Maintenance of one frigate on station on a semi-permanent, deterrent basis would, in practice, require the deployment of:

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two, in order to allow for maintenance and serviceability.

5. The Prime Minister will know of the permanent Falklands Garrison comprising 42 Royal Marines; they are equipped with light infantry weapons. The annual roulement of the detachment is scheduled to take place between 24 March and 5 April.

6. I am copying this letter to PS/Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary.