

# Big military exercise to test Falklands defence



George Foulkes: "It is provocative."

AN EXERCISE to practise the United Kingdom's capability for rapid reinforcement of the Falkland Islands in case of emergency is to be held from March 7 to March 31, Armed Forces Minister Mr Ian Stewart announced last night.

The Ministry of Defence emphasised that the exercise had been planned for some time and did not reflect any increase in tension in the area.

Mr Stewart also confirmed during a Commons debate on the Royal Air Force that the Govern-

ment has decided not to put out to civilian contract the air-sea rescue services currently operated by the RAF and the Royal Navy.

The Falklands exercise, codenamed Fire Focus, will involve the deployment of RAF Phantom aircraft and several hundred troops, who will be airlifted to the area to join soldiers currently serving in the islands' garrison.

Following the reinforcement phase, a series of exercises will take place to take advantage of the training facilities available in the Falklands.

The Fire Focus operation is the first exercise involving the movement of significant numbers of troops and quantities of equipment to the Falklands, and the MOD emphasised yesterday that the Government always had made clear its intention to mount exercises from time to time to practise the reinforcement capability.

The Ministry said that the ability to mount a rapid reinforcement had been the basis of the UK's contingency planning to ensure the security of the Falkland Islands in case of need since the opening the airport at Mount Pleasant.

It was pointed out that the existence of the reinforcement capability had allowed some reductions to be made in the strength of the normal peacetime garrison.

A spokesman said: "The British Government's commitment to maintaining the security of the Falkland Islands is very clearly on record. Exercise Fire Focus is simply a means of practising the ability to discharge this commitment should the need ever arise."

Labour Foreign Affairs spokesman, Mr George Foulkes, last night criticised the exercise, saying that from a diplomatic point of view he thought it unwise and unnecessarily provocative.

"I would have thought that this kind of exercise could well be done elsewhere without the political implications," he said.

The decision to leave search-and-rescue in the hands of the RAF and Navy follows consideration by the MoD of a proposal put forward last year by Bristol Helicopters which already operates such services in the Shetland and the Hebrides.

Mr Stewart told the House: "We are satisfied that there is a military requirement for the RAF and the RN search-and-rescue service to continue and we believe this decision will be welcomed by the wider community."

The Minister added that it would be open to the Transport Secretary to decide to supplement the military services with civilian personnel.

# Government spy ban fails

Jean Stead and Richard Norton-Taylor

AN NEW attempt by the Government to prevent the publication of the memoirs of the MI6 officer Mr Anthony Cavendish failed yesterday when a Scottish judge refused to grant an order banning the book, *Inside Intelligence*.

The Government immediately asked for leave to appeal against the decision, which was granted.

After a four-day hearing, Lord Coulsfield, announcing the decision at the Court of Session in Edinburgh, said he would publish his reasons at the end of the week.

Costs were granted to the Scotsman, the Glasgow Herald and Scottish Television, all of whom have been contesting the Government's attempt to secure a ban on the publication or transmission of any information from the book.

The editor of the Scotsman, Mr Magnus Linklater, said: "This is excellent news. The Crown has now tried two entirely different ways of suppressing this book and the information in it, both of which have now signally failed."

He said the Crown had argued unsuccessfully that it was not a threat to national security but that there was a general rule of confidence applying to intelligence matters, and then had changed their tack and tried to suggest the book contained information that did con-

stitute a threat to national security.

"But they failed to prove that point, because they would not come up with detailed information about what passages were, in fact, dangerous. Of course, nothing in the book is a threat to national security and that is the point."

Mr Cavendish said yesterday that the idea that former intelligence officers were bound by a life-long duty of confidence seemed to have been invented by the Government to cover its position once it had become clear that the Official Secrets Act was inoperable.

The Government's claim — which it is still making in the Spycatcher case — was also questioned yesterday by Mr George Young, former Vice Chief of MI6 who wrote a preface to *Inside Intelligence*.

"No one had heard of the life-long duty of confidence up to 1961 when I left," he said. "I felt very strongly that I should not be inhibited and said so to Sir Dick White (former head of MI6) though I made it clear I would not disclose any delicate operations," Mr Young added.

He described the Government's concept of an absolute duty of confidence as "silly".

The Government has already lifted the ban on about two thirds of *Inside Intelligence*. The remaining one third has been blue pencilled and an undertaking was given in court that the Scotsman, the Glasgow Herald and Scottish TV would not use any of that material before the appeal hearing.

EW 26.2.88

# Police secretly monitor student protest meeting

STUDENT activists at Edinburgh University, who resisted the installation of a rocket range at South Uist in the late 1950s, had their meetings secretly monitored by police, it has just been revealed. They included Sir Russell Johnston, then chairman of the University Liberal Club, who yesterday expressed shock and dismay.

The undercover surveillance operation is revealed in the latest batch of secret Scottish Office papers made available to the Press under the 30-year-rule. The hitherto confidential documents contain a letter sent by Chief Constable John Inch, of the City of Edinburgh Police, to Sir Charles Cunningham, then Secretary of the Scottish Home Department, providing a verbatim account of the protest meetings.

The correspondence reveals that Chief Constable Inch, who later received a knighthood, wrote to Sir Charles on 8 March 1957: "Since the agitation commenced at the end of last week regarding the proposed rocket range at South Uist, I have had special attention given to it in respect of the effects in Edinburgh."

"On Saturday, 2nd instant, at the University, delegates from the University's Highlands Society, Liberal Club, Nationalist Club and Scottish Renaissance Society, decided to form an 'Edinburgh University Friends of Uist Association'. They chose as their chairman, Douglas Henderson, who you will remember from my previous reports is the Secretary of the Nationalist party of Scotland."

Yesterday Johnston, MF Nairn and Loch said he was being monitored. He recently odd a hand or two on the activities.

4.1.88 Sc

Home on the