

w/e Box.

CONFIDENTIAL

PUBLIC OPINION BACKGROUND NOTE 111
(produced 4th May 1982)

1. Introduction

The Sunday Times on 2nd May 1982 included the results of an MORI survey on attitudes to the Falkland Islands dispute. The interviewing for the survey was conducted on 30th April 1982 and in addition to questions on attitudes to the Falkland Islands dispute, the survey included a standard voting intention question. The MORI survey found 43% claiming they would vote Conservative, 30% Labour and 25% for the Liberals or Social Democrats. The results of this latest MORI study compares with the results of the previous MORI study conducted 25/26 April 1982 which found 40% claiming they would vote Conservative, 31% Labour, 27% for the Liberals or Social Democrats. The findings from these MORI polls compare with the results from our latest 'tracking' study conducted from 21st to 26th April which found 31½% claiming they will vote Conservative, 33% Labour and 35% for the Liberals and Social Democrats. The interviewing for the Gallup tracking study was completed largely before the interviewing for the earliest MORI study and was spread over a period which saw rapid developments in the Falkland Islands dispute. It is difficult not to conclude that the period since early last week (week starting 25th April) has seen a major move of public opinion towards the Government. The table below summarises this movement.

<u>Poll</u>	<u>Fieldwork Date</u>	<u>CON</u>	<u>LAB</u>	<u>LIB/SDP</u>
		%	%	%
Gallup	21/26 April	31½	33	35
MORI	25/26 April	40	31	27
MORI	30 April	43	30	25

It would appear that we have seen a very sharp further movement of support away from the SDP/Liberals to the Government. In a rapidly changing situation (all these surveys had been completed several days before the first bombing of the Port Stanley airfield) it is impossible to predict whether this improvement will be maintained even until the local government elections on May 6th.

Details of the trend in support as shown in our Gallup tracking studies in recent weeks are shown on the following page.

VOTING INTENTION

(unprompted question, excluding don't knows)

	<u>CON</u>	<u>LAB</u>	<u>LIB</u>	<u>SOCIAL</u> <u>DEMOCRAT</u>	<u>OTHER</u>	<u>LEAD</u>	<u>LIBERAL & SOCIAL</u> <u>DEMOCRAT</u>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<u>1979</u>							
May (GE)	43.9	36.9	13.8	-	5.5	+7.0	13.8
13/16 June*	42.0	43.5	13.0	-	5.0	-9.0	13.0
<u>1982</u>							
6/11 Jan	25.5	30.0	17.0	25.0	2.5	-4.5	42.0
13/18 Jan	27.5	29.5	13.0	26.5	3.5	-2.5**	39.5
20/25 Jan	30.0	27.0	14.0	26.5	2.5	+3.0	40.5
27 Jan/1 Feb	29.0	29.0	15.0	24.0	3.0	0.0	39.0
3/8 Feb	29.0	29.0	15.0	26.0	1.0	0.0	41.0
10/15 Feb	27.5	34.0	14.5	21.5	2.5	-6.5**	35.0
17/22 Feb	26.5	33.5	14.0	22.0	4.0	-7.0	36.0
24 Feb/1 March	31.0	32.5	11.0	22.5	3.0	-1.5	33.5
3/8 March	30.0	33.5	11.5	21.0+	4.0	-3.5	32.5
11/+5 March	31.5	33.0	11.5	21.5+	2.5	-1.5**	33.0
17/22 March	34.0	30.0	11.0	21.0+	4.0	+4.0	32.0
24/29 March	32.0	28.0	11.0	27.5+	1.5	+4.0	38.5
31 March/5 April	34.0	27.0	10.0	26.0 +	3.0	+7.0	36.0
7/12 April	31.5	29.0	11.0	26.0+	2.5	+2.5	37.0
13/19 April	31.0	30.0	10.0	26.0+	3.0	+1.0	40.0
21/26 April	31.5	33.0	10.5	24.5+	0.5	-1.5	35.0

*First Gallup post-Election survey

** Published Polls

+ Includes those saying they would vote for the 'Alliance'

2. Government Record

The results of the latest 'tracking' study completed well before the latest developments in the Falkland crisis found effectively no change in the popularity of the Government, with 34% approving of our record to date and 55% disapproving. Details are shown on the following page.

GOVERNMENT RECORD

	<u>Approve</u> %	<u>Disapprove</u> %	<u>Don't know</u> %
<u>1979</u>			
13/18 June	34	41	25
<u>1982</u>			
6/11 January	23	65	12
13/18 January	24	65	12
20/25 January	26	62	13
27 Jan/1 Feb	25	62	13
3/8 Feb	26	63	11
10/15 Feb	24	66	10
17/22 Feb	22	66	13
24 Feb/ 1 March	23	63	13
3/8 March	24	65	11
11/15 March	29	59	12
17/22 March	28	60	13
24/29 March	29	58	13
31 March/ 5 April	31	57	12
7/12 April	32	56	12
13/19 April	34	54	12
21/26 April	34	55	11

3. Popularity of Political Leaders

Mrs Thatcher's popularity remained almost unchanged in our latest study. Mr Foot's popularity dropped slightly after the dramatic improvement in the previous study (13/19 April). Mr Steel's popularity improved slightly - back to a level last reached in late 1981. Details are shown below:-

POPULARITY OF POLITICAL LEADERS

	<u>Mrs Thatcher</u>			<u>Mr Foot</u>			<u>Mr Steel</u>		
	<u>Sat.</u>	<u>Dis-</u> <u>sat.</u>	<u>Don't</u> <u>Know</u>	<u>Is</u>	<u>Is</u> <u>Not</u>	<u>Don't</u> <u>Know</u>	<u>Is</u>	<u>Is</u> <u>Not</u>	<u>Don't</u> <u>Know</u>
<u>1982</u>									
6/11 January	30	65	5	20	65	14	62	20	18
13/18 January	32	65	4	18	67	16	59	22	19
20/25 January	32	64	4	17	68	15	59	22	19
27 Jan/1 Feb	33	62	5	19	64	17	60	18	22
3/8 Feb	31	65	4	20	63	17	61	20	19
10/15 Feb	29	66	5	19	66	15	59	23	17
17/22 Feb	29	65	5	20	64	16	58	20	21
24 Feb/1st March	32	63	5	21	64	15	55	23	22
3/8 March	30	66	4	20	64	16	58	24	18
11/15 March	34	62	4	21	65	14	58	22	10
17/22 March	33	62	5	22	64	14	59	21	20
24/29 March	35	59	6	19	65	15	61	20	19
31 March/ 5 April	37	58	5	20	65	15	60	22	18
7/12 April	35	60	5	23	61	16	63	18	19
13/19 April	36	60	5	28	59	14	63	18	19
21/26 April	37	59	4	26	60	14	66	17	17

4. Published Polls(a) MORI (Sunday Times 2nd May 1982)

The interviewing for the MORI poll published in the Sunday Times on 2nd May was conducted on 30th April. The voting intention part of this survey is considered in the introduction to this note. The survey was mainly concerned with attitudes to the Falkland Islands dispute. The survey found six out of ten electors would not be prepared to lose one serviceman's life to regain the Falklands. MORI asked 'Which should determine the British Government's long-term policy on the Falkland Islands - the wishes of the Falkland Islanders alone or the interests of Britain as a whole, taking the Falkland Islanders' views into account?' Only 24% selected the Falkland Islanders' wishes, 72% selected the interests of Britain as a whole.

MORI found seven out of ten electors claiming to be satisfied with the Government's handling of the situation. 62% thought that the Government's readiness to use force had been 'about right'. Only 18% thought the Government was too willing to use military force and 16% thought that the Government had not been willing enough to use military force.

(b) NOP (Standard 4th May 1982)

The Standard on 4th May included the results of an NOP poll (conducted 29/30 April) on public attitudes in Greater London. The poll found in terms of voting intention:-

	<u>CON</u>	<u>LAB</u>	<u>ALLIANCE</u>	<u>OTHERS</u>
All London (%)	40	34	25	1
Inner London (%)	36	36	27	1
Outer London (%)	42	33	24	1

(c) MORI (Scotsman 3rd May 1982)

The Scotsman on 3rd May included the results of an MORI poll on attitudes in Scotland. The survey was conducted between April 22nd and 28th. It found a significant increase in Conservative support - up from 18% in February 1982 to 23% in April. Labour support was down from 39% (Feb) to 34%, Alliance support down from 29% to 26% and SNP support up from 14% in February to 17% in April.

On the question of economic prospects, 25% thought economic conditions in Scotland will improve over the next 12 months (11% Feb 1982), 25% stay the same (20% Feb 1982), 44% get worse (65% Feb 1982) and 6% did not have a view (4% Feb 1982).

When asked about devolution only 22% wanted a 'completely independent Scottish Assembly separate from England', 45% a 'Scottish Assembly as part of Britain but with substantial powers', 27% 'no change from the present system' and 6% had no view.