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MO 5/21

20th May 1982

Dear John,

A.C. 29/5

f.a.

Depending on the course of this afternoon's debate you may wish to have available a general piece on military options which might be used in the Foreign Secretary's winding up speech. I now attach a draft.

I am copying this letter to John Coles (No 10), Michael Arthur (FCO), Jim Buckley (Lord Privy Seal's Office) and to David Wright.

Yours ever

Michael Evans

(N H R EVANS)

J Holmes Esq

PIECE FOR INSERTION IN WINDING-UP SPEECH: 20 MAY

MILITARY OPTIONS

The House will know that I cannot comment in detail on the military options now open to the Government or the operations that could be conducted now that the hopes we had of a peaceful solution have diminished. The Task Force was deployed to do two things: to enable us to negotiate from a position of strength, and to apply military pressure directly on the Argentines. The military pressure has been exerted in a number of different ways - mainly and most recently in connection with the enforcement of the Total Exclusion Zone.

Our forces will continue to enforce the Total Exclusion Zone. We may expect more attacks on Argentine surface supply vessels, like those spotted by our Sea Harriers in the Falkland Sound on 16 May, and attacks on Argentine aircraft trying to break the blockade. Coupled with these operations, there may be more raids, like the one on Pebble Island on 15 May. Such daring and skilfully executed raids reduce the military resources available to the forces of

occupation and damage the morale of the Argentine troops.

I will not be drawn further, Mr Speaker, on military options. The long blockade and the direct assault on the Islands remain in the range of possibilities. Military decisions will be taken, as they have been, when they need to be. There is no question of our negotiating posture having been constrained by a military timetable. Nor, indeed, of our military actions having been restricted by our diplomatic efforts. The two activities have proceeded in tandem. Our forces have been able to take the measures necessary for their self-protection and for the fulfilment of their mission. If the Argentines had shown a serious willingness to seek a peaceful solution through the UN Secretary General, the talks would be now have borne some fruit.

20 MAY 1992

