

FAKLANDS

LINE TO TAKE

A My Hon Friend the Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mr Luce) made a statement to the House on 23 March. I have nothing to add to that.

*It is our duty to support and defend the islanders to the best of our ability. That we shall do.*

REFERENCES

A: House of Commons. 23 March 1982.

SUPPLEMENTARIES

1. Are the men still there?

My latest information is that they are.

2. When will they leave?

Shortly.

3. How?

Appropriate action is in hand.

4. Are you not over-reacting?

The presence of these men on British territory without our authorisation is a breach of our regulations and an infringement of our sovereignty. We have no wish to portray a few workmen as an invasion threat; but we cannot allow <sup>we making arrangements</sup> ~~them to remain.~~ <sup>to ensure their safe departure.</sup>

5. Argentine reaction?

We have made clear to the Argentines that this situation is not of our seeking. Our hope is that this regrettable incident can be resolved with the least possible consequences for our political relations.

6. Will you now end the illegal occupation of Southern Thule?

As the House knows, we have repeatedly protested to the Argentine Government about the illegal station on Southern Thule. Our legal position is fully protected. We have also made it clear to the Argentines, most recently at the talks with them in February in New York, that their

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2 yrs ago -  
small party -  
To it then now  
there



continued presence on Southern Thule prejudices the climate for discussion on the wider sovereignty issue. We take this matter very seriously.

7. Do the Argentines claim the Dependencies?

Argentina has explicitly claimed sovereignty over South Georgia for more than 50 years and over the South Sandwich Islands (of which Southern Thule is one) for more than 30 years. We have no doubts about British sovereignty over the Falkland Islands Dependencies.

## ILLEGAL LANDING ON SOUTH GEORGIA: CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

19 March: A British Antarctic Survey field party report that an Argentine Navy cargo vessel is anchored in Leith harbour. A party of about 60 Argentines have set up camp and an Argentine flag has been hoisted.

20 March: The BAS field party informs the Argentines that they have landed illegally and that they must leave.

The Ministry of Defence instruct HMS Endurance to prepare to sail to South Georgia with a detachment of Marines from Port Stanley.

HM Ambassador Buenos Aires informs the Argentine Ministry of Foreign Affairs that we are treating the infringement of our sovereignty very seriously. The Argentine Charge d'Affaires is called in to the Foreign Office and told the same. The Argentine Government profess ignorance but agree to look into the matter urgently.

21 March: HMS Endurance departs for South Georgia.

Argentine MFA inform us that the ship will leave South Georgia shortly and that no service personnel are involved.

22 March: We receive confirmation that the ship has left but there are doubts about whether all the men have gone.

News Department issue statement on incident.

In the evening, BAS confirm that about six men and some equipment remain.

23 March: HMS Endurance is instructed to sail on for South

/Georgia



Georgia and remove the men, if possible without using force.

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Mr Luce makes a statement to the House of Commons.

Argentine Government later warns that use of HMS Endurance would be gravely provocative. They are told we wish to avoid this if possible: if they can propose an acceptable alternative method of removing the men, we are prepared to let them do so.

24 March: Argentine Government reply that they wish to prevent the situation from escalating if possible: but they need time to devise a method of taking the men off.

25 March: We instruct HM Ambassador Buenos Aires to make clear to the Argentine Government that they must act quickly if we are to contain the situation.



## FALKLAND ISLANDS

Sir Frederick Burden  
 Sir Nigel Fisher  
 Mr Patrick McNair-Wilson  
 Sir Bernard Braine  
 Sir William Clark  
 Sir Donald Kaberry

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Mr Tony Marlow	Mr Michael Brotherton	Mr Julian Critchley
Mr Christopher Murphy	Mr Geoffrey Johnson-Smith	Mrs Elaine Kellett-Bowman
Mr Roger Moate	Mr David Trippier	Mr Jim Lester
Mr Michael Brown	Mr Martin Stevens	Mr Ivan Lawrence
Mr Churchill	Mr Fergus Montgomery	Mr Percy Grieve
Mr Peter Mills	Mrs Sheila Faith	Mr Nicholas Winterton
Sir John Biggs-Davison	Miss Janet Fookes	Mr Jim Spicer
Mr Ian Lloyd	Mr Peter Thomas	Mr John Townend
Sir Anthony Fell	Mr T. H. H. Skeet	Mr Warren Hawksley
Mr Robert Atkins	Mr Peter Griffiths	Mr Jack Aspinwall
Mr Geoffrey Rippon	Mr Andrew Bowden	Sir Brandon Rhys-Williams
Sir Nicholas Bonsor	Sir Paul Bryan	Sir Victor Goodhew
Mr Jocelyn Cadbury	Sir Hugh Fraser	Mr James Kilfedder
Mr Michael Shersby	Mr K. Harvey Proctor	Mr John Spence
Mr Richard Body	Mr Charles Irving	Sir David Price
Mr Tim Brinton	Mr Keith Speed	Mr Alan Clark
Sir Philip Goodhart	Mr Keith Stainton	Mr Neil Thorne
Mr Julian Amery		

That this House, being greatly disturbed at the implications evident as a result of the recent landing on the Falkland Islands Dependency of South Georgia, of a party of Argentinians conveyed there by an Argentine naval transport ship, calls upon Her Majesty's Government to give an assurance that a Royal Naval force, of sufficient strength to repel any attempt by the Argentine Government to annex this British colony by force, will be kept on station in the area; and further asks Her Majesty's Government to declare in unequivocal terms that the Falkland Islands sovereignty will not be transferred to any foreign power, unless the islanders have asked for such a transfer in a referendum.

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★ figure following this symbol gives the total number of names of Members appended, including those added in this edition of the Notices of Questions and Motions.