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CABINET

DEFENCE AND OVERSEA POLICY (OFFICIAL) COMMITTEE
SUB-COMMITTEE ON THE SOUTH ATLANTIC AND THE FALKLAND ISLANDS

INTERNATIONAL REACTION TO THE ARGENTINE INVASION
OF THE FALKLAND ISLANDS

Note by the Secretaries

Attached for the information of the Sub-Committee is a Note by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, commissioned at ODO(SA)(82) 2nd Meeting, in the form in which it was submitted to the Defence and Oversea Policy Committee.

Signed C H O'D ALEXANDER
G R G MIDDLETON
S D SPIVEY

Cabinet Office

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General

1. As of 6.00 pm on 7 April, widespread concern at the situation has been expressed around the world. Expressions of disapproval at the use of force have proliferated. Specific condemnations of the Argentine action, and calls for withdrawal, have come from some 35 states, mostly in Europe and the Commonwealth. The Ten have collectively and (except for Greece and apparently Ireland) individually condemned the invasion as has the US. Early US reactions which spoke of both Britain and Argentina as 'friendly nations' have now become more favourable to Britain, although the US privately point out they must not overly antagonise Argentina if they are to retain influence with her.

2. Other states have expressed support for the UN Resolution, and thus by implication for what it called for. Support has not been forthcoming from India (memories of Goa?), or Malaysia (anti-British feeling in present leadership?), while Japan has been distinctly hesitant and seems chiefly concerned that Britain should not herself use force. Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union have been broadly non-committal with signs of a Soviet tilt towards Argentina. China has refused to be drawn beyond expressing distaste for colonial squabbles.

3. No state seems to have declared unqualified support for Britain's claim to sovereignty, though Commonwealth Caribbean and African countries accept that for the Falklands self-determination should be the over-riding principle. In Spain and in Latin America there have been the expected reiterations of support for Argentina's claim to sovereignty, but not for the invasion which has received no unqualified official backing. Venezuela and Panama have been the most pro-Argentine; Brazil and Colombia more neutral with talk of mediation; Mexico has publicly condemned the use of force to resolve international conflicts, while Chile has taken a generally anti-Argentine line.

Arms Embargos

4. The US, Canada, Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, Austria and France have imposed arms embargos on Argentina. Some countries like Sweden may have them already. Switzerland has said it will sell arms to neither side.

Trade Sanctions

5. As yet no country has taken action on trade, and only Germany on credits. Of the Ten, Denmark, Italy and Belgium have told us they will comply with whatever can be agreed at Community level, and the Belgian Presidency are hoping for agreement on a package of measures by Friday. The Greeks have said they could go along with a total ban on imports if all their partners agreed. The Danes have expressed interest in stopping credits.

6. Other European countries like Sweden, Turkey, Portugal, Norway, Finland and Austria might be prevailed upon to follow an EC lead.

Other Measures

7. New Zealand has broken off diplomatic relations. Papua New Guinea has threatened to. Belgium, Canada and Australia have recalled their Ambassadors for consultations. Canada has cancelled some official military visits. New Zealand has forbidden Argentina civil aircraft to land.

8. A number of countries have pointed out in response to British lobbying that their relations with Argentina are not sufficiently substantial for them to take effective measures against her.

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