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BV
CC(82) 18th
Conclusions

COPY NO 79

CABINET

CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the Cabinet
held at 10 Downing Street on

TUESDAY 20 APRIL 1982

at 5.15 pm

PRESENT

The Rt Hon Margaret Thatcher MP
Prime Minister

The Rt Hon William Whitelaw MP
Secretary of State for the Home Department

The Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey Howe QC MP
Chancellor of the Exchequer

The Rt Hon Sir Keith Joseph MP
Secretary of State for Education and Science

The Rt Hon John Nott MP
Secretary of State for Defence

The Rt Hon Michael Heseltine MP
Secretary of State for the Environment

The Rt Hon Nicholas Edwards MP
Secretary of State for Wales

The Rt Hon John Biffen MP
Lord President of the Council

The Rt Hon Norman Fowler MP
Secretary of State for Social Services

The Rt Hon Baroness Young
Lord Privy Seal

The Rt Hon Cecil Parkinson MP
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and
Paymaster General

The Rt Hon Lord Hailsham
Lord Chancellor

The Rt Hon Francis Pym MP
Secretary of State for Foreign and
Commonwealth Affairs

The Rt Hon James Prior MP
Secretary of State for Northern Ireland

The Rt Hon Peter Walker MP
Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food

The Rt Hon George Younger MP
Secretary of State for Scotland

The Rt Hon Patrick Jenkin MP
Secretary of State for Industry

The Rt Hon David Howell MP
Secretary of State for Transport

The Rt Hon Leon Brittan QC MP
Chief Secretary, Treasury

The Rt Hon Nigel Lawson MP
Secretary of State for Energy

The Rt Hon Lord Cockfield
Secretary of State for Trade

SECRET

THE FOLLOWING WERE ALSO PRESENT

The Rt Hon Sir Michael Havers QC MP
Attorney General

The Rt Hon Michael Jopling MP
Parliamentary Secretary, Treasury

SECRETARIAT

Sir Robert Armstrong
Mr R L Wade-Gery
Mr D H Colvin

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The Cabinet had before them a Note by the Secretary of the Cabinet (C(82) 13) covering a revised print of a possible Falkland Islands Emergency Bill; and a minute of 16 April to the Prime Minister from the Home Secretary commenting on the case for early legislation.

THE HOME SECRETARY said that in his view no action should be taken in present circumstances to introduce emergency legislation. If the situation changed the existing draft Bill could be brought forward very rapidly. It would then provide a framework under which Defence Regulations could be made as required, subject to affirmative resolution. Such Regulations could if necessary have retrospective force.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRADE said that in certain circumstances the lack of emergency legislation could limit the scope for action by the Government; but no major difficulty was anticipated.

THE PRIME MINISTER, summing up the discussion, said that there seemed to be no case for legislation in present circumstances. The draft Bill should be held ready for early introduction by the Home Secretary if required at a later stage.

The Cabinet -

1. Took note.

The Cabinet had before them a Note by the Secretary of the Cabinet (C(82) 15) to which were attached draft proposals for a settlement received on 19 April from the United States Secretary of State, Mr Haig, and for comparison the earlier draft agreed between him and British Ministers the previous week.

THE FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH SECRETARY said that the latest proposals communicated by Mr Haig after his second visit to Buenos Aires were unsatisfactory in a number of important respects. As the Prime Minister had informed Parliament earlier that afternoon, he himself would be visiting Washington on 22 April. He would be putting counter-proposals to Mr Haig, who was himself clearly disappointed by the results of his talks in Buenos Aires and did not appear to rule out continuing his attempts at negotiating a settlement.

THE PRIME MINISTER, summing up the discussion, said that maximum diplomatic, economic and military pressure would need to be exerted if the Argentine Government were to be brought to agree to acceptable provisions in three crucial areas in particular: withdrawal arrangements; the interim administration; and provision for negotiating a definitive solution. Meanwhile it was important to preserve the confidentiality of the draft proposals, and comment should be kept to a

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Possible
Emergency
legislation

Previous
Reference:
C(82) 17th
Conclusions,
Minute 1

Current
Situation

Previous
Reference:
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Conclusions,
Minute 2

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minimum. She would arrange for the Press to be told that the Cabinet had taken stock of the present position, particularly in the light of the Argentine proposals communicated by Mr Haig and of the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary's forthcoming visit to Washington.

The Cabinet -

2. Took note.

Cabinet Office

21 April 1982

SECRET