

CONFIDENTIAL

MEETING OF INFORMATION GROUP ON THE FALKLANDS

10 AM FRIDAY 7 MAY 1982

Present:

B Ingham - No 10
J Groves - Director General, COI
N Fenn - FCO (part of meeting)
I McDonald - MoD
D Colvin - Cabinet Office
S Fuller - Presentation Unit
R Hatfield - Presentation Unit
B Mower - No 10.

Diplomatic

It was agreed that our position had come over reasonably well in this morning's Press. The Foreign Secretary is making a Statement to the House at 11 am today followed by a Press Conference at noon where he will set out the bare bones of the United Nations proposals. Presentational difficulties arise from our not wanting to be seen to be putting to the United Nations just what the Argentines had turned down in the Peruvian/US proposals.

Military

MoD said that they were going into a new phase of public relations including unattributable briefings for specialist groups. Mr Nott is to appear on Weekend World. The CDS is to go to Northwood and speak to correspondents afterwards, demonstrating UK resolve.

MoD reported the views of editors expressed to Frank Cooper that they required regular situation reports, very quick denials of rumours and photographs of casualties (as they got in the case of Northern Ireland). They implied strongly that there were unnecessary delays within Whitehall.

There was some discussion about the problems associated with yesterday's announcement on the lost Harriers leading to the view that we were suffering from lack of Ministerial involvement in presentation, particularly in OD(SA). The Chairman said that he was in any case intending to minute the Prime Minister about all of this. He would also be raising the question of Ministerial criticism of the media.

MoD had no knowledge of the reports of a damaged Argentine destroyer.

MoD were intending to brief unattributably on missile capability and also on the sinking of the Belgrano about which unhelpful foreign reports were still circulating.

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The Chairman asked SAPU if they could look again at:

- (i) whether it would be necessary to declare war in the event of bombing the Argentine mainland;
- (ii) sporting contacts (football players seem to be ahead of Ministers in connection with the World Cup);
- (iii) what is happening to the inquiry into the death of an Argentine prisoner.

The Chairman in summing up the current position said that we had enjoyed some success with our announcement on diplomatic moves partly offset by the loss of Harriers. There was now an inevitable lull when various ideas would develop. Bombing the mainland was still an issue; discussion of UN trusteeship was taking off: the Prime Minister was keen we should explain why there is this inevitable lull in activity; she also suggested that we might gently and tactfully make the point that our losses so far had not been excessive in relation to the size of the Task Force.

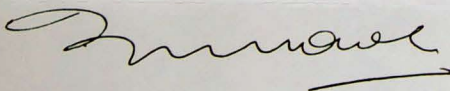
Weekend

It was undecided whether or not it would be necessary to meet over the weekend. The Chairman will be in touch as necessary. Home telephone numbers of members are as follows:

Bernard Ingham	660 8970
P Brazier	048 65 4603
N Fenn	062 72438
I McDonald	435 3748
D Colvin	Duty Officer, Cabinet Office, will advise.
S Fuller	373 0492
R Hatfield	720 8796
B Mower	0442 52277.

Next Meeting

Subject to FCO agreement, the Group should in future meet on Mondays at 10 am, starting next Monday (10 May).


B MOWER
7 May 1982