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MEETING OF INFORMATION GROUP ON THE FALKLANDS

4.15 PM SUNDAY 9 MAY 1982

Present:

B Ingham - No 10  
R Westbrook - FCO  
C Worrall - MoD  
H Colver - No 10.

Diplomatic

The FCO reported on the latest developments in negotiations at the UN. The Secretary General had seen both sides on two occasions the previous day and was scheduled to see them again separately that day. Our Ambassador to the UN had given a Press Conference at which he had said negotiations were on the move, it was too early to predict results, and the British were approaching the talks with great urgency. FCO also reported that at this stage each side had not been shown the other's responses, but matters were now reaching a stage where the Secretary General might synthesise what had been put before him so far.

Other points that were being made included the point that the extension of the Exclusion Zone did not amount to aggression, that there would be no acceptance of unconditional ceasefire, and that the work being done now in New York was designed to clothe the procedural proposals with some more detail.

The informal meeting of EC Ministers had concluded with an agreement that there should be no national press briefing but M Tindemans had given a Presidency briefing afterwards at which he had reported EC solidarity behind the UK on the Falklands, stressed the need to implement Resolution 502 and reiterated the point that no decisions had been taken on renewal of the import ban. He had implied that this had never been intended as a decision-making meeting and, anyway, the ban had until May 17 to run.

Military

MoD reported that they had made two statements that day, the first refuting Argentine claims of an invasion and the second dealing with repatriation of Argentine prisoners of war. There was the probability of further statements later about various actions of harassment against Argentine forces during the day.

MoD continued to face the problem of reconciling, in both content and time, their statements with those coming from reporters with the Task Force.

An announcement had also been made about the feasibility study on converting Hercules aircraft to the tanker role for air to air refuelling.

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OD(SA)

The Chairman reported that OD(SA) was meeting at Chequers that afternoon. Cranley Onslow was an additional attender, though it was thought Mr Pym had returned from Belgium in time.

HUGH COLVER  
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