

CONFIDENTIAL

MEETING OF INFORMATION GROUP ON THE FALKLANDS

10 AM MONDAY 17 MAY 1982

Present:

B Ingham - No 10
J Groves - Director General, COI
R Westbrook - FCO
J Gee - MoD
R Hatfield - Presentation Unit
S Fuller - Presentation Unit
D Colvin - Cabinet Office
B Mower - No 10.

Military

MoD had no information about expected action today but would not be surprised if there were another limited raid. It was evident that the Argentines were making only limited assaults on the Task Force possibly preserving their strength for threatened invasion. We have not yet located the Argentine submarines: two of them could be nearing the end of their operational tour. All of the surface Argentine fleet were believed to be within their 12 mile coastal limit.

Diplomatic

We are marking time today. Parsons will say that he has been engaged on interim consultations in London and has instructions to continue negotiations. He will be seeing the Secretary General at noon New York time.

Mr Pym's bilateral talks with Mr Haig concluded that there was no new US initiative. After the talks he repeated his confidence of continued support from Allies and his hopes of the renewal of EC sanctions.

After the preliminary EC discussions, Mr Pym said that certain partners needed time to consult and a final decision would be taken this evening. FCO had been briefing to the effect that the difficulties were all political and were different as between Denmark, Ireland and Italy.

We must continue to express our confidence in EC solidarity drawing on the Schmidt, Mitterrand Press Conference and the recent Cheysson Press Conference in which he said that, in the last analysis, the Mandate was a matter of "accounting" while the Falklands was a matter of principle. On the subject of the Mandate itself, Thorn has put forward informal proposals. Our position continues to be that we believe in a four to five year settlement which will be better for the stability of the Community. However, if a formal proposal is put forward, we should be willing to consider it providing it was based on the May 1980 terms. Mr Pym has said that, at first sight, the proposals put forward so far are not consistent with the original terms. We had no evidence to support the Times story that the Prime Minister had agreed with Mr Mauroy to accept a one year settlement.

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The FCO line on Mr Nott's comment yesterday about never conceding sovereignty to the Argentines was that he omitted the end of the sentence "unless Islanders said it was their wish". Clearly we should take opportunities to get this straight because it will be used by the Argentines as evidence of our bad faith. We should stress there is no change of policy.

Mr Nott at present was disinclined to appear on Panorama this evening. The view of the Group was that he should accept this invitation, particularly as it would provide further opportunity to get the record straight about his remarks yesterday. The Prime Minister was to be interviewed by IRN this afternoon for transmission from 5 pm onwards and would take part in the Jimmy Young Show on Wednesday.

There was still no decision about the future of Commander Astiz, despite reports to the contrary. We are still considering the legal implications.

COI reported that they had established direct line service in Spanish to radio networks in six Latin American countries. The Chairman suggested we might confirm that posts are receiving adequate graphic material from us.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Group will be held at 10 am on Tuesday 18 May 1982.

Brian Mower

BRIAN MOWER
17 May 1982