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MEETING OF INFORMATION GROUP ON THE FALKLANDS

10 AM WEDNESDAY 26 MAY 1982

Present:

B Ingham	-	No 10
N Kelly	-	COI
N Fenn	-	FCO
J Gee	-	MoD
D Colvin	-	Cabinet Office
R Hatfield	-	Presentation Unit
S Fuller	-	Presentation Unit
H Mills	-	Chancellor of the Duchy's Office
B Mower	-	No 10.

Military

The MoD reported on yesterday's activities and the expected Statement in the House today. They were not aware of any ground activity. No 10 said their line would be that yesterday was undeniably a bad day. There would possibly be a MoD Statement this morning but the main Statement would be from Mr Nott in the House at 3.30 pm. The Prime Minister will speak to the Tory Women's Conference at 2.45 pm on the Falklands. She would not anticipate Mr Nott's Statement but the mood of her speech would be that we must hold fast. We expected yesterday to be difficult and, unfortunately, it proved so.

It was understood that the Fund announced yesterday was for the relief of all involved in the Task Force, not just casualties, but we needed clarification.

Diplomatic

FCO confirmed that the Resolution based on the Irish formula, as amended by non-aligned countries, was now acceptable and we would be able to vote for it; although Argentina might ask for more amendments. It was not voted on last night because Costa Mendez had asked for more time. We could confirm today that progress had been made towards an agreed Resolution which would be compatible with our basic position. It seeks to ensure the implementation of Security Council Resolution 502 and asks the Secretary General to start talks with both parties to reach mutually acceptable terms for a ceasefire.

There was some discussion about the presentational difficulty, given varying Ministerial statements on our negotiating position. FCO suggested three formulations. Mr Nott had said that if the Argentines would withdraw, the situation would be transformed. Parson's statement, reported in telegram 855, said that the situation was caused by the Argentine invasion and refusal to withdraw. The effect of this is the conflict. Remove the cause and the effect will disappear. In the House it had been said that there would be no solution without an Argentine withdrawal and if they will not go, they must be pushed.

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FCO informed the meeting that the State Department were not commenting on Mr Haig's alleged remarks about the need for magnanimity from Britain. They were, however, stressing that there was no diminution in their support for us. The FCO is denying that we are being pressed by the US to cease our military efforts.

The question of longer term solution is being discussed today. It was wrong to present Independence for the Islands as our only objective. It is one, and not necessarily the leading, option.

FCO confirmed that we were not blockading the Plate Estuary and the Uruguayan authorities had been so informed.

Commenting on stories circulating last night, the Chairman firmly denied that No 10 Press Office had indicated the names of ships involved in the action to the Press. They did not know them.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Group would be held at 10 am on Thursday 27 May 1982.

Brian Mower

BRIAN MOWER
25 May 1982

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