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MEETING OF INFORMATION GROUP ON THE FALKLANDS

10 AM THURSDAY 27 MAY 1982

Present:

B Ingham - No 10  
P Brazier - COI  
N Fenn - FCO  
M Pentreath - MoD  
D Colvin - Cabinet Office  
S Fuller - Presentation Unit  
D Hatfield - Presentation Unit  
H Mills - Chancellor of the  
Duchy's Office  
B Mower - No 10.



Military

MoD had said that there were no overnight reports of contact with Argentine forces or Argentine attacks on the Task Force. We should continue today to damp down expectations of an immediate movement on Port Stanley.

On the question of the method of announcing casualties and losses, we should say that we are reviewing the position. MoD said that they expected to make some progress towards a new policy in the course of the day and they might be in a position to make an announcement later. Our line on the hospital ship Uganda is that the FCO have not received requests to move it. BBC reported their understanding that it was not in San Carlos waters - which was helpful.

The Group could shed no light on the various stories about supply of Exocets and other arms from Libya, Israel/Luxembourg etc.

Diplomatic

FCO brought the meeting up-to-date with developments in New York and Washington.

The Security Council had passed Resolution 505 and Parsons had made clear that the only condition for ceasefire acceptable to us would be its linking with an unequivocal commitment by Argentine to withdraw.

The Secretary General had spoken to Parsons and Listre (the Argentine representative in the absence of Costa Mendez, Ros and Roca) asking for a reply within 24 hours to the question "What is your Government's definition of acceptable terms for a ceasefire?". We shall probably avoid a direct reply and play for more time by suggesting that the Secretary General should send emissaries to Buenos Aires and London.

Meanwhile our line should be that the Resolution puts in place a diplomatic mechanism and this is important. It reaffirms

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(3 times) Resolution 502 and it is there to be used when Argentina is ready to accept its requirement to withdraw. Our position has been stated by Parsons in that we must have absolute certainty of Argentine withdrawal from the Falkland Islands before we can enact a ceasefire and that such concepts as parallel withdrawal, which were under discussion a week ago, are no longer relevant.

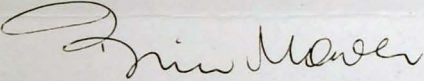
FCO also informed the Group of the forthcoming OAS talks and United States' fears that they would be isolated. In the light of this Haig is pressing Britain to look beyond restoration of British administration in discussing our objectives. He is concerned that the state of public opinion in the United States may change against us if it sees, as a result of the OAS meeting, lasting damage to the position of the United States in Latin America.

Television

FCO mentioned that Mr Pym would be interviewed tonight on TV Eye. The Chairman said that consideration was being given to the Prime Minister's accepting a broadcast interview next week.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Group will take place at 10 am on Friday 28 May 1982.

  
BRIAN MOWER  
27 May 1982