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MEETING OF INFORMATION GROUP ON THE FALKLANDS

10 AM WEDNESDAY 2 JUNE 1982

Present:

B Ingham - No 10  
J Groves - Director General, COI  
N Penn - FCO  
R Moore - MoD  
D Colvin - Cabinet Office  
S Fuller - Presentation Unit  
R Hatfield - Presentation Unit  
K Long - Chancellor of the  
Duchy's Office  
B Mower - No 10.

Military

MoD brought the Group up-to-date on a number of separate issues.

- A Harrier was lost yesterday: MoD may make an announcement today;
- HMS Hecla to call at Montevideo today to disembark Argentine prisoners and injured British personnel;
- Commander Astiz is due to arrive in the next day or two and will be detained at Chichester Keep;
- the existence of napalm at Goose Green was initially carried by BBC and ITN correspondents. MoD confirmed that it could have been used but were not able to confirm specifically whether it had been used. FCO were not at present intending to protest about this;
- information passed to editors implied that the 5 Brigade had not yet landed;
- the NV Astronomer was currently being reloaded at Devonport with supplies to replace the Atlantic Conveyor;
- defence correspondents were briefed yesterday by the Permanent Under Secretary who would be seeing provincial and American correspondents today;
- MoD gave briefing yesterday on the question of returning bodies to the United Kingdom and probably would not now issue a statement. Our line remained as before;
- we had no information about alleged mine clearing by Argentine prisoners. This is being investigated.

There was some discussion about treatment of demands from foreign and Commonwealth press for access to the Falklands after hostilities had ceased. This matter would be raised this evening at the Chancellor of the Duchy's meeting.

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At the same time we should raise the question of the Government Information Service's producing an early report about media handling during the crisis.

Diplomatic

The BBC had reported that President Reagan would not see the Prime Minister in London. Subsequently the Chairman was able to tell the meeting that the US had denied this.

Mr Haig had turned down our invitation for talks today. Neither this nor his continuing proposals for a settlement had leaked in Washington and we were not under any media pressure on this issue. The FCO reported on developments in New York where the UK had been asked to comment on some further suggestions from the UN Secretary General, all of which seemed to be unacceptable to some degree. Argentina had clarified its conditions for a ceasefire, all of which were unacceptable to the UK and Parsons will thus inform the Secretary General. There was likely to be an informal consultation of the Security Council today and the position might emerge publicly in the Security Council tonight. We might then seek to float a new Resolution setting out what we could accept which would basically maintain our existing position. Our line for today should be that we continue to keep in touch with the Secretary General. Parsons had seen him yesterday and will see him again today. His Mandate expires today and we expect him to report to the Security Council. We are in touch with other Governments. Any question of ceasefire must be based on Argentine withdrawal to a definite timetable. We hope that the Security Council will decide to insist on that.

FCO also reported Parsons' denial of BBC report that he had transmitted a Prime Ministerial demand for Argentine surrender. The story was invention.

The Presentation Unit mentioned the possibility of putting around information in non-aligned countries about the activities of Israel, South Africa and Libya in providing arms to Argentina.

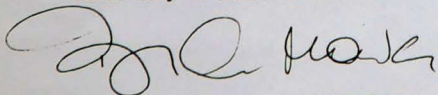
There was some misunderstanding about Ministerial decisions on the future of the Governor and it was agreed that this should be cleared up as quickly as possible.

Prime Ministerial Interviews

The Chairman informed the meeting of a number of interviews that the Prime Minister was giving in the course of the day.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Group will take place at 10 am on Thursday 3 June 1982.



BRIAN MOWER  
2 June 1982