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MEETING OF INFORMATION GROUP ON THE FALKLANDS

10 AM THURSDAY 3 JUNE 1982

Present:

B Mower - No 10
J Groves - Director General, COI
N Fenn - FCO
F E Dodman - MoD
D Colvin - Cabinet Office
S Fuller - Presentation Unit
R Hatfield - Presentation Unit
K Long - Chancellor of the
Duchy's Office
I Kydd - No 10.

Military

We were consolidating our position before entering the final phase. There had been an accident involving explosives. Several versions of what might have happened had been reported by the Press. MoD were not yet in a position to deny that Argentine troops had been used to move ammunition. A Board of Inquiry had been set up; nothing could be said until its findings were known. If we had been using Argentine troops this would be in breach of the Geneva Convention.

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OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT

A number of Argentine prisoners had protested about their conditions.

MoD expected to release a statement in the near future concerning the Australian Prime Minister's message regarding HMS Invincible.

Diplomatic

The Chairman reported that the Prime Minister, when speaking to American correspondents the previous evening, had made clear that in the long term she thought there was no place for Argentina on the Falkland Islands and that she did not want them there. She also said that there was no way she could accept a pause which might allow Argentine forces to regroup. She had not spoken to any other countries about an MFO security force although she also said that it was clear President Reagan was aware of this possibility.

The Prime Minister had also volunteered that we had dropped leaflets on Tuesday whereas, in fact, it was unclear whether or not leaflets had yet been dropped. There were three separate leaflets and the intention was that they should be dropped all at once. No copies were yet available but it was thought that one leaflet was

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by Rex Hunt; the second had been produced by Naval Operations and showed a picture of Astiz; and the third was along the lines of "I am an Argentine, I surrender, I give myself up".

It was ODSA's view that there should be a civil administration but whether or not Rex Hunt would return was still under consideration. Patrick Keatley's article was incorrect. Our line should remain that his return was still under consideration although our intention to restore British administration was in no doubt.

FCO reviewed overnight developments at the United Nations. The Security Council vote on the Spanish/Panamanian Resolution was not expected until 14.00z. It was unclear whether the Resolution would command 9 votes. In any case it would not pass but given the doubt over the 9 votes, we should not say that we would use our veto.

There would be interest in the Prime Minister's interviews and we should draw attention to the texts particularly in view of the FT reporting which totally misinterpreted her remarks. Anyone who suggested magnanimity should be asked to explain what they meant; the Prime Minister made her position quite clear.

If asked whether the Prime Minister had spoken on the telephone to the President we should refuse to confirm or deny but make the point that we continued to remain in very close touch with the Americans. We should leave the impression that there would be nothing remarkable in their having spoken.

The Chairman advised that the Prime Minister had, when speaking to the Americans last night, effectively ruled out UN trusteeship.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Group would take place at 9.45 am on Friday 4 June 1982.

JH

IAN KYDD
3 June 1982