

CONFIDENTIAL

MEETING OF INFORMATION GROUP ON THE FALKLANDS

10 AM TUESDAY 15 JUNE 1982

Present:

B Ingham	-	No 10
N Kelly	-	COI
N Fenn	-	FCO
R A A Moore	-	MoD
D Colvin	-	Cabinet Office
R Hatfield	-	Presentation Unit
S Fuller	-	Presentation Unit
K Long	-	Chancellor of the Duchy's Office
B Mower	-	No 10.

Military

MoD confirmed that General Moore had signed the surrender document at 9 pm local time (1 am London time). The message was received by MoD at 4 am this morning and transmitted to the Prime Minister for release to the Press at 6.45 am. General Menendez had been in touch with the Junta by telephone but, as far as we were aware, had not left the Islands.

MoD also referred to a signal saying that General Menendez reported 14,000 Argentine troops on the Islands. They probably only have three days food and the situation is verging on the need for disaster relief. The Canberra is going immediately to San Carlos with the intention of embarking the first prisoners of war.

It was understood that the intention still was to hold special category troops and top men.

MoD have no information on the condition of the Islanders.

MoD confirmed the Harrier pilot's estimate that probably 100 Argentine aircraft had been destroyed up to the time he left two weeks ago.

Diplomatic

FCO informed the meeting that OD(SA) were considering an FCO suggestion that we should send a message to Argentina via the Swiss asking them if they agreed that hostilities are now at an end and whether they are ready to accept the return to Argentine ports of prisoners of war. If agreed, the Prime Minister will say in her Statement this afternoon that we are in touch with the Argentines through the Swiss about details for the return of the prisoners.

Sir Anthony Parsons called on the Secretary General last night and will be putting a formal note to the Security Council informing them of the latest developments.

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The FCO informed the meeting of the thinking of our European partners on the future of the Islands which is well out of line with our own. We should have to work hard to try to avoid being isolated diplomatically.

It was hoped that OD(SA) would also this morning discuss the future of the Governor and whether he should be allowed to speak to the Press after the Prime Minister's Statement this afternoon. Present thinking is that there should be some kind of double-harness government between the reinstated Governor and a military Governor, bearing in mind the continued need for military presence at least in the interim period. Immediately the Financial Secretary would be sworn in as the officer administering the Islands with the return of British administration. It was agreed that our line on the future of the Islands should continue to be on the following basis. Argentina had disqualified herself from any role in the Falkland Islands for the foreseeable future. Britain was concerned with the restoration of normal life on the Islands allowing the Islanders the chance of genuine self-determination. In the longer term we were looking to economic development of the Islands. Security of the Islands in the immediate future would need to be secured by the British. However we were looking for an international context both for economic development and security. We still hoped that the US would have a role in this. It is by no means a hopeless enterprise bearing in mind that many countries have an interest in securing stability in that part of the world. We were reasonably confident that we could create the right framework. In the longer term there was no reason why we could not re-establish a normal business relationship with Argentina.

Presentation

The Group agreed that there was a case for the Prime Minister's not taking interviews at least for today. Mr Nott should take the lead with Mr Parkinson supporting, particularly with the international media. We should take every opportunity to get our message across internationally including the need for humanitarian aid to the Argentine prisoners of war. The Chairman told the meeting that the Prime Minister would still go to New York, although the timing was uncertain. She would be heavily exposed to media interviews. The question remained therefore whether, if still in this country tomorrow, she should take on domestic media interviews.

Press on the Falklands

Both BBC and ITN had indicated their wish to fly in private aircraft in order to obtain film footage. They had been deterred while there was still no certainty of an end to hostilities. However, Ministers would be considering the general question today and the Group emphasised the great urgency attached to it. If, as now seems possible, journalists can be flown into Stanley, the most important decisions relate to the criteria of selection on which the FCO had made some progress.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Group would take place at 10 am on Wednesday 16 June 1982.

BRIAN MOWER
15 June 1982