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MEETING OF INFORMATION GROUP ON THE FALKLANDS

10 AM THURSDAY 17 JUNE 1982

Present:

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

Military

MoD confirmed that they were still trying to ascertain the number of prisoners but think probably that it is less than originally suggested by Menendez. Those in the West Falklands are in poor condition but the situation is better in East Falklands. It is thought that there is little chance of Argentina agreeing to direct repatriation of prisoners and probably they will go to Montevideo by the Canberra and Norland. The Chairman said he was strongly denying any suggestion of Mr Nott's moving from his present post. MoD commented that he was not prepared to do any domestic television.

BBC and PA are to have facilities for filming from a Hercules, on a pool basis, possibly over-flying the Islands.

There was extended discussions about the proposal for a BBC Piper Chieftain aircraft to fly in from Chile to pick up film. The Commander of land forces had agreed to the flight because he wanted facility for the removal of two sick journalists. However it was being assumed that Brian Baron and a photographer would go in with them. The Group decided that in general we should advise against private enterprise flights of any kind at present and concentrate on organising facility for, especially, foreign journalists to get into the Islands as quickly as possible. In this specific case the aircraft should go in only to collect film (and the sick journalists); it should not include any journalists or photographer whether or not they intend to disembark in the Islands. It would be preferable if the MoD could charter the 'plane to remove any suggestion of our agreeing to private enterprise. MoD and FCO undertook to sort this out and cable Santiago. MoD would subsequently speak to Chris Kramer, overseas editor of the BBC, who was not likely to be pleased.

We could deny suggestions that, on present plans, we should not have been able to mount an exercise of this kind in 1984. There may have been less support ships but still sufficient. MoD had no confirmation of Argentine soldiers shot by their officers nor of Chinese sailors going to the Falklands against their will.

Diplomatic

FCO confirmed that we had no reply from the Argentines to our request. All indirect information suggested that they would turn

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it down or not even reply.

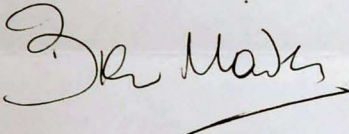
We understood that France and West Germany had proposed that sanctions should be lifted now by consensus. We were trying to postpone it until Ministers could discuss it at the weekend but we had no doubt that the Partners would be unwilling to sustain it. In the meantime, however, it was agreed that we should continue to suggest that we were fighting to retain these sanctions.

It was important to emphasise that the arms embargo had been implemented individually by all ten nations, not by the EC as a group, and was quite unconnected with trade sanctions.

The Chairman confirmed that he was briefing to the effect that we were not returning to the previous position in the Falklands given the entirely different situation. However, there was little doubt that the Argentine Government would regard the new arrangements as a return to colonial rule.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Group would take place at 10 am on Friday 18 June 1982.



BRIAN MOWER  
17 June 1982