

Mr Duggan

Mr Cowling

cc

Mr Harding

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FALKLAND ISLANDS

1. Mr Ridley has drawn attention to the need - once a resumption of negotiations gets the go-ahead - to prepare international and domestic opinion.
2. This is clearly right and there would seem to be two separate tasks:
 - (a) to update guidance for posts (and we presumably have a good deal of existing material to draw on). Mr Ridley made the point to me that, during his visit to Latin American countries earlier this year, he found a good deal of ignorance in Governments about the actual situation in the Falkland Islands, i.e. the essential Britishness of the population and of its way of life and the absence of an Argentine presence and influence. We should make sure that new guidance brings this out clearly.
 - (b) apart from the initial public line on a resumption of talks, we need to consider ways of preparing domestic opinion for the possibility of an eventual agreement involving concessions on sovereignty. Again this would seem to boil down to putting over the realities of the situation on the ground in the Falklands, the smallness of the population and the essential connection between the Islands' future prosperity and economic cooperation with Argentina.
3. I should be grateful if you could consider the above and discuss. The first priority is clearly to make sure that our guidance to posts is in hand.

P. R. Fearn

P R Fearn
South America Dept.

30 November 1979