

W19

NOTE TO REMIND

FIRST FALKLANDS CONSULTATIVE LUNCH: TUESDAY 8 JULY 1980

Present:

- Alan Clark MP
- Ray Whitney MP
- Bernard Braine MP
- Michael McNair Wilson MP
- John Farr MP
- Sir N Fisher

Ray Whitney was in favour of a settlement with Argentina at any price: Alan Clark, the most die-hard on the other side. The other four adopted a much more reasonable position. All of them appreciated being consulted and certainly benefitted from having the facts of the situation explained, about which they were woefully ignorant.

I did not go so far as to suggest solutions but merely expressed the nature of the problem and the possible options. I did however invite them to ponder on the question of what the word 'sovereignty' actually means.

I think the nearest one can get to summarising their views is the following:

1. They are happy to negotiate with the Argentines and see the point of realising the economic potential by removing the threat to the future of the Islands.
2. They rest content with being told that nothing will be concluded which is not acceptable to the Islanders. They all affirmed that any solution that was acceptable to the Islanders would be acceptable to the Tory Party in Parliament.

3. They attached enormous importance to our extending the airport to take long range jets, partly as a symbolic gesture of defiance against the Argentine and partly as a precaution against negotiations breaking down. It would certainly put us in a strong position in relation to public opinion to undertake this, although I do not judge it to be necessary under the present circumstances.

4. They wanted the process of consultation to be continued and offered to form a group of those interested, either Government or all-party to which I could come for future consultation whenever I wished. I accepted this in principle but said the time was not yet ripe.



8 July 1980

Nicholas Ridley

Mr Jupp
Mr Ripley
Mr Davis
CEB
1077
Sec 183
199

ALW 04/325/2		
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Mr Fearn

cc: Mr Harding

FALKLAND ISLANDS

As you know, Mr Ridley privately gave lunch yesterday to some of the Conservative MPs who have shown an interest in the Falklands. He is giving another such lunch on 22 July.

2. I attach a copy for information only of a note the Minister has done to remind himself before the next lunch of his impressions after this one. After the second lunch, he will probably wish to make an overall assessment with a view to minuting to the Secretary of State.

3. Mr Ridley aims to have a similar lunch, after the summer Recess, for Opposition MPs.

J W Yapp

9 July 1980

J W Yapp
APS/Mr Ridley

W189



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London S.W.1

From The Minister of State

ACW 040/325/2

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9 June 1980

Dear Alan

I hope you will be able to come to lunch with my wife and me on Tuesday 8 July, 1.00 pm. We shall lunch at my flat, 50 Warwick Square (3rd floor).

I am asking a few other colleagues who have also shown interest in the problem of the Falkland Islands so that we may have a discussion over lunch. I do hope you will be able to come: I will be having another lunch later in July if you cannot make this one.

Yours sincerely
Nicholas

Nicholas Ridley

The Hon Alan Clark MP
House of Commons
LONDON SW1A 0AA

See (200) on
ACW 040/325/2
for note on
lunches.