

16/12/19

(61)

*M<sup>r</sup> Fearn*

*Thank you. RR. 177/12*

PS/Mr Ridley

*Wednesday*

*5 pm.*

cc

PS

PS/LPS

PS/PUS

Mr Day

Mr Harding

Mr Westbrook, News Dept.

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FALKLAND ISLANDS: UNATTRIBUTABLE PRESS BRIEFING

1. Mr Ridley will be giving an unattributable press briefing to selected journalists (list attached) at 5.00 p.m. on 17 December. I submit a brief.

Flag A

*folio (60)*

*see below*

*P. R. Fearn*

P R Fearn  
South America Dept.

16 December 1980

*Mr Davies*

*Mr Davies*

*CEB*

*18/12*

*(18/12)*

## FALKLAND ISLANDS: UNATTRIBUTABLE PRESS BRIEFING

Speaking Notes

1. No doubts about British sovereignty; but Argentine claim exists and will not go away.
2. Dispute overshadows Islanders' everyday lives: blights economy, prevents development and causes population decline.
3. Could simply ignore Argentine claim, but at best status quo would not improve; at worst could be faced with more tangible action. (If Pressed: Argentines could obviously make life very difficult for the Islanders, e.g. by stopping flights).
4. Thus our concern for the Islands' future makes us want to look at possible bases for solution. But Islanders' wishes paramount. It is their future and they must decide. Therefore it was essential for me to go and consult Islanders fully on how best to proceed.
5. Islanders are understandably apprehensive about change. But they recognise need to remove dead hand of dispute. Active and serious debate now going on. We hope to have their response in New Year, but no time limit and no pressures.
6. Only the beginning of a long road. Talking only of possible bases and cannot predict Argentine reactions. Any eventual solution would have to be endorsed by Islanders and Parliament.
7. If Islanders decide against further exploration of possibilities with Argentines, we shall of course continue to support them as before, as best we can.

/Points to Make (if asked)

Points to Make (if asked)

8. Details of leaseback proposal would be for negotiation. But minimum requirements would have to be:

Long lease (several generations)  
 Unchanged British administration throughout  
 FIG rights to license fishing and oil exploration

9. Recognise necessity of assisting economic development of Islands. Solution to dispute would help on this.

10. Fish. Have not declared 200 mile fishery zone:

- (i) so as not to exacerbate situation; and
- (ii) because we cannot effectively enforce or police it.

Actual fishing unlikely to be profitable to Islands or UK, but licensing could produce useful revenue.

11. Oil. No-one knows whether there is any oil. We have not been able to agree on continental shelf delimitation with the Argentines, who claim the whole area. In the absence of agreement, we hold the median line between Argentina and the Islands to mark the boundary of the Islands' continental shelf. But no reputable commercial company is going to explore in disputed waters: solution of dispute must come first. (If asked: we have protested to the Argentines about their offering blocks for oil exploration which appear to extend on to our side of the median line.)

12. Home Secretary looking into nationality problems.

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PS/Mr Ridley

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cc : Mr Fearn SAD  
Mr Fenn

UNATTRIBUTABLE BRIEFING ON THE FALKLAND ISLANDS

1. I attach a list of journalists who have accepted Mr Ridley's invitation to an unattributable briefing on the Falklands tomorrow afternoon at 5 pm.
2. Mr Adams will attend from News Department.

*R Westbrook*

Roger Westbrook  
News Department

15 December 1980



MR RIDLEY'S UNATTRIBUTABLE BRIEFING ON THE FALKLAND ISLANDS :  
WEDNESDAY 17 DECEMBER : 5 pm

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John Humphrys

BBC TV News

Andrew Walker

BBC External Services

Michael Frenchman

The Times

Patrick Keatley

The Guardian

Charles Douglas-Home

The Times

Hugh O'Shaunessy

Financial Times

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Mr Fearn

FALKLAND BRIEFING

PRESS

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1. Mr Ridley has seen Mr Westbrook's minute of 11 December and agrees he should see the journalists suggested, plus Mr C Douglas-Home.
2. Mr Westbrook is arranging for them to call on the Minister on Wednesday 17 December at 5.00 p.m. I would be grateful if you would provide a brief by close of play on Tuesday 16 December.

*P L Bean*

P L Bean  
APS/Mr Ridley

12 December 1980

- cc: PS                      Mr Day  
       PS/LPS                Mr Harding  
       PS/PUS                Mr Westbrook

11/24  
58

Mr Westbrooke

Wednesday 17 Dec at 5.00 p.m. would suit Mr Ridley. RA 12/12

PS/Mr Ridley ✓

cc : PS  
PS/LPS  
PS/PUS  
Mr Day  
Mr Harding  
SAD (Mr Fearn)

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FALKLAND ISLANDS : UNATTRIBUTABLE PRESS BRIEFING

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1. In his minute of 9 December, Mr Fearn records Mr Ridley's willingness to give an unattributable press briefing on the Falklands. News Department would welcome such a briefing. The issue is, for the moment, not attracting press attention but it will be news throughout the coming months and to have some key journalists in full possession of the facts of the situation as we see it will be an undoubted advantage.

2. I recommend that Mr Ridley should invite the following journalists to such a briefing :

+ Charley D-Home

- John Humphrys, BBC TV News
- Andrew Walker, BBC External Services
- Michael Frenchman, The Times
- David Adamson, Daily Telegraph
- Patrick Keatley, The Guardian
- Robert Harvey, The Economist

Once a date and time has been agreed, News Department will contact the journalists.

*Rog Westbrooke*  
 Roger Westbrooke  
 News Department