

16/12/19

(61)

M^r Fearn

Thank you. RR. 177/72

PS/Mr Ridley

Wednesday

5 pm.

cc

PS

PS/LPS

PS/PUS

Mr Day

Mr Harding

Mr Westbrook, News Dept.

<i>AW 940/325/1</i>		
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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

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 ISLANDS BRIEFING

UNATTRIBUTABLE

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
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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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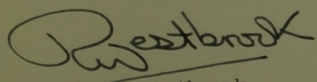
1. In his minute of 9 December, Mr Fearn records Mr Ridley's willingness to give an unattributable press briefing on the Falklands. News Department would welcome such a briefing. The issue is, for the moment, not attracting press attention but it will be news throughout the coming months and to have 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.


 Roger Westbrooke
 News Department

Falklands protest rejected

X
SAMD.

By Patrick Keatley,
Diplomatic Correspondent

The British Government has registered a protest with Argentina over publication of an advert in leading newspapers in Buenos Aires inviting applications from oil companies to drill in an area of the South Atlantic which infringes upon the 200-mile economic zone of the Falkland Islands.

The Argentine Foreign Ministry has rejected the protest, declaring that Britain has never gone through the process of issuing a formal declaration defining such a zone.

Pending the final outcome of the UN Conference on the Law of the Sea, Britain and other countries have proceeded to issue such proclamations, and the British Government's insistence upon sovereignty over the island of Rockall in the North Atlantic, west of Scotland, reflects this concern to secure future oil and fishing rights.

The quadrilateral zones now announced by Argentina as a drilling block involves intrusion into the 200-mile zone surrounding the Falkland Islands colony for about one-third of the total distance from the outer line to the high-tide mark. It is possible that Britain could exercise leverage upon many oil companies by warning those who bid for exploration and production rights in British areas of the North Sea that they will forfeit such rights if they choose to proceed with operations in Falkland waters under an Argentine licensing system.

One obvious option seems now to be ruled out by the unresolved quarrel between Britain and Argentina over the sovereignty of the Falklands. Because there has been a series of contacts between London and Buenos Aires which is still continuing, an abrupt proclamation now of sovereignty over an economic zone would be taken as a hostile act by Argentina, and might well lead to overt intrusion by its navy, commercial fishing fleet, or both.

FINANCIAL TIMES

Britain protests over Falkland Islands

BY HUGH O'SHAUGHNESSY

BRITAIN HAS protested to Argentina over its action in seeking tenders for oil drilling rights in water seen by Whitehall as belonging to the Falkland Islands.

Despite these new signs of potential oil wealth round Britain's remote South Atlantic colony, Whitehall is strongly arguing the merits of the so-called "Hong Kong" solution to the problems posed by Argentina's claim to the Falklands.

This solution, presented among others to the 1,700 islanders by Mr. Nicholas Ridley, Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, who visited the islands

last month, would involve the cession of titular sovereignty to Argentina over the archipelago in return for full rights there for many years. Mr. Ridley has said he would initially seek a 999 year lease.

This is seen in London as a way of satisfying an Argentinian claim while at the same time ensuring the continuance of the traditional way of life of the islanders, who have repeatedly expressed their wish to remain British. The plan is meeting particular resistance from older members of the Falklands community.

Latest population figures show that in the past year 104 people have left the islands.

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NT
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cls BA
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