



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

2 April 1982

Dear John,

Falkland Islands: House of Commons Debate

/ I enclose a draft speech for the Prime Minister's
/ use in opening the Commons Debate tomorrow. Some notes
for supplementaries are also attached. The draft has
not been seen by Lord Carrington. I am copying the draft
to David Omand (MOD) and would be grateful if he could
pass any comments direct to you, copied to us.

Yours ever

J E Holmes
(J E Holmes)
Private Office

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street

FALKLAND ISLANDS

1. It became clear during the course of yesterday, after nearly two weeks of rising tensions in our relations with Argentina, that considerable elements of the Argentine Navy had made a landing at Port Stanley in the Falkland Islands and had established military control. We do not have full details of the present circumstances in the Islands, but the fact of Argentine occupation is clear. I am sure that the House will join me in totally condemning this unprovoked aggression by the Government of Argentina against British territory. The Argentine action has been in the most flagrant disregard of the appeals made by both the Secretary General of the United Nations and by the President of the Security Council on 1 April that both Britain and Argentina should refrain from the use of force and should resolve present tensions by diplomatic means.

2. I should state to the House that Her Majesty's Government continue to regard the Falkland Islands and the Falkland Island Dependencies as British territory. Our firm objective is to ensure that the Falkland Islands are freed from this Argentine occupation and should return to British administration. Our sovereignty dispute with Argentina is long-standing. But we have no doubt about British sovereignty and we cannot accept that the clear wishes of Falkland Islanders, who are British in stock and wish to remain British in allegiance, should be denied through this act of unprovoked aggression.

3. The incident which has led to the present situation was in no way in proportion to the outcome. It has been seized upon by the Argentine Government in order to impose their claim.




4. It is worth recalling the history of the past two weeks. On 19 March an Argentine party, employed on a straightforward commercial contract, landed at Leith harbour in South Georgia from an Argentine naval transport vessel and raised the Argentine flag. They were instructed by the Commander of the British Antarctic Survey base at nearby Grytviken, which is the accepted point of entry into South Georgia, either to leave or to proceed to Grytviken to obtain the necessary clearance. They refused to do so and, although the Argentine ship and most of the party did leave on 22 March, a number of Argentines remained. The Argentine Government, who claimed to have had no prior knowledge of the landing and who assured us that no military personnel were involved, were asked to arrange for the men's ~~removal~~^{debarment} or to ensure that the party sought the necessary authorisation for their presence on British territory. We made clear that while we had no wish to interfere in the operation of a normal commercial contract, we were unable to acquiesce in the illegal and unauthorised presence of foreign nationals on British territory. Faced with a potentially serious situation, HMS Endurance was ordered to the area in order to assist as necessary.

5. We were however resolved to ensure that this superficially minor problem should not be allowed to escalate and we made it plain to the Argentine Government that our object was to prevent a rise in tension between us, and that we wished to achieve a peaceful resolution of the problem by diplomatic means. To help in this HMS Endurance was ordered not to approach the Argentine party at Leith and she has at no time made any attempt to interfere with their operations.

but to go to Grytviken

6. However, it soon became clear that the Argentine Government had little interest in a regularisation of the problem. On 25 March, a further Argentine Navy transport vessel arrived at Leith to deliver supplies to the men. Requests by our Ambassador



for an early response from the Argentine Government on arrangements for the men's departure were refused. We again made clear that, even at that late stage, the party's presence could be regularised by obtaining the proper authorisation from the British authorities at Grytviken. No immediate reply from the Argentine Government was received and there was meanwhile increasing evidence of the deployment of vessels of the Argentine Navy into the Falklands area. On 26 March, the Argentine Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement announcing that the men on South Georgia would be given all necessary protection. On 28 March, we received an outright refusal from the Argentine Foreign Minister to regularise the men's position. Instead, it re-stated, in discourteous terms, Argentina's claim to sovereignty over the Falkland Islands and the Falkland Island Dependencies and that in its view the only matter for discussion was a transfer of sovereignty to Argentina. At this stage the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary sent a message to the United States Secretary of State asking him to intervene and to urge restraint. Our American friends acted promptly. But their initiative was also flatly rejected by the Argentine Government. On 30 March, my hon Friend the Minister of State (Mr Luce) made a statement to the House, again stressing our wish to defuse the issue and to pursue a diplomatic solution to it. In pursuit of this aim our Ambassador in Buenos Aires proposed to the Argentine Foreign Minister on 31 March that a senior official should visit Buenos Aires in a further attempt to find a peaceful way out of the impasse. The Argentine Foreign Minister replied to this on 1 April. This reply was totally negative and made clear that for him the diplomatic channel was closed.

7. By late on 1 April there was mounting evidence that the Argentine Navy was positioning itself for an attack on the Falkland Islands. In this grave situation we immediately sought the assistance of our friends, both in the United States

/and



and in the European Community, to dissuade Argentina from precipitate action. But their appeals, including a personal intervention by President Reagan to the Argentine President, were turned aside. Following a request by the United Nations Secretary General that both sides should continue their efforts to achieve a diplomatic solution, we sought an Emergency meeting of the Security Council on 1 April. This led to a statement by the President of the Council urging both sides to refrain from the threat or use of force in the area. The British Representative agreed without hesitation. But the Argentine said nothing.

8. It is now all too apparent that the Argentines had from the outset no intentions of heeding the Security Council's recommendations. All the while their preparations for an attack on the Falklands were in progress, and that attack was carried out on 2 April. I do not have words to express my revulsion at this unprovoked and entirely unwarranted attack by massive naval forces on a peaceful and lightly-populated territory. We do not have full details of the situation in the Falkland Islands. But I am sure that this House will join me in confirming that our feelings at this grave moment are with the Governor and the people of the Islands.

9. We are taking appropriate military and diplomatic measures to sustain our rights under international law and in accordance with the provisions of the UN Charter. We shall also be taking urgent international action, in particular in the United Nations Security Council where we have again sought an Emergency debate, in order to achieve a clear condemnation of this Argentine action leading to an early withdrawal of Argentine forces from the Falkland Islands.

SUPPLEMENTARIES FOR A STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER: 3 APRIL

WHAT DETAILS CAN YOU GIVE US ON THE INVASION?

Communications with the Governor in Port Stanley and with our Embassy in Buenos Aires have been very difficult. However, the Americans tell us that they have been officially informed by the Argentine Government that Argentina has occupied the Falkland Islands. Additionally, we have information from a British Antarctic Survey Ship in the region of the Falkland Islands. This vessel, the Bransfield, was monitoring the Falkland Islands radio broadcasts. Argentine news agencies have made broadcasts about invasion and Ham radio operators have also picked up transmissions. The picture we have is of a landing in the early morning of 2 April by a force of 200 troops. The force moved in on several ships; 3 took up station in the outer harbour of Port Stanley. We understand that Government House was surrounded by armed troop carriers. Subsequently we understand the Argentines began to make broadcasts over the Islands broadcasting system, announcing the formation of a military junta.

WAS THERE AN EXCHANGE OF FIRE?

2. Reports vary. Several amateur radio reports state that fire was exchanged for about 3 hours, that 3 Argentines were injured, one seriously, but that there were no British casualties. Other reports suggest that the Marines in Port Stanley did not offer resistance. We await further information.

WHAT WAS HMS ENDURANCE DOING AT THE TIME OF THE INVASION?

3. As we stated earlier, HMS Endurance was in South Georgia, lying off Grytviken in order to render assistance if necessary as the S Georgia situation developed. S Georgia is several hundred miles from Port Stanley.

WHAT IS THE POSITION IN SOUTH GEORGIA?

4. We understand that an Argentine vessel moved into Cumberland Bay, near
/Grytviken,



Grytviken, on the afternoon of 2 April. We have no reports of any additional activity there.

WHY WAS NO ACTION TAKEN BEFOREHAND?

5. It is self-evident: the Islands are several thousand miles from Britain. I must underline that we have worked intensively since this crisis began to reach a settlement by peaceful diplomatic means. The Argentines have rejected all such proposals and have chosen to launch this unprovoked invasion. But there should be no doubt that the British Government will respond in appropriate fashion now that the Argentines have taken this disgraceful and wholly unjustified action.

WHAT ARE THE MILITARY MEASURES YOU ARE TAKING?

6. You will understand that I cannot go into this. But we cannot accept this occupation of British Territory. I must express with all the force at my command the outrage and indignation of the British Government and the British people at this unprovoked act of aggression against the Islands.


HAVE YOU CONSULTED OUR ALLIES?

7. On the diplomatic front we have sought the assistance of many countries including the Americans and European partners. I much regret that the Argentines proved unwilling to heed these appeals, which included a personal intervention by President Reagan with the Argentine President.

WHAT ACTION ARE YOU TAKING TO PROTECT BRITISH CITIZENS IN ARGENTINA?

8. Contingency plans exist for the protection of British citizens throughout the world should an emergency arise in the country where they happen to be.

/Arrangements



Arrangements are being made accordingly. There are 17,000 British passport-holders in Argentina. According to Argentine radio broadcasts, the Argentine Interior Minister has ordered the police and Government officials throughout Argentina to guarantee the security of and respect for British subjects, their property, institutions, commercial ventures, enterprises and corporations. We expect these instructions to be scrupulously observed.

WILL YOU NOW EXPEL ARGENTINE DIPLOMATS FROM BRITAIN?

9. We shall take every measure in our power to bring home to the Argentines our revulsion at their action. We shall be breaking our diplomatic relations with Argentina.

WHAT INFORMATION IS THERE ON THE WAY IN WHICH THE ISLAND POPULATION IS BEING TREATED?

10. We have little hard information on this. But one report states that the Commander of the Argentine invasion force made a broadcast in Port Stanley on the afternoon of 1 April in which he said that the Islanders would be free to leave or to stay as they chose. They would be offered certain guarantees about their way of life, freedom of worship, cultural and educational continuity, etc. We reject totally the right of the Argentines to make such proposals.