

PRIME MINISTER'S SPEECH IN THE  
DEBATE ON THE FALKLAND ISLANDS

---

WEDNESDAY 14 APRIL

MR. SPEAKER,

IT IS RIGHT THAT AT THIS TIME OF GRAVE CONCERN OVER THE  
FALKLAND ISLANDS AND THEIR PEOPLE, PARLIAMENT SHOULD  
BE RECALLED SO THAT THE GOVERNMENT MAY REPORT  
AND THE HOUSE MAY DISCUSS THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS.

OUR OBJECTIVE, ENDORSED BY ALL SIDES OF THE HOUSE IN  
RECENT DEBATES, IS THAT THE PEOPLE OF THE  
FALKLAND ISLANDS SHALL BE FREE TO DETERMINE THEIR  
OWN WAY OF LIFE AND THEIR OWN FUTURE.  
THE WISHES OF THE ISLANDERS MUST BE PARAMOUNT,  
BUT THEY CANNOT BE FREELY EXPRESSED, LET ALONE  
IMPLEMENTED, WHILE THE PRESENT ILLEGAL ARGENTINE  
OCCUPATION CONTINUES.

/ THAT IS WHY



THAT IS WHY OUR IMMEDIATE GOAL IN RECENT DAYS HAS BEEN TO SECURE THE WITHDRAWAL OF ALL ARGENTINE FORCES IN ACCORDANCE WITH RESOLUTION 502 OF THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, AND TO SECURE THE RESTORATION OF BRITISH ADMINISTRATION.

OUR STRATEGY HAS BEEN BASED ON A COMBINATION OF DIPLOMATIC, MILITARY AND ECONOMIC PRESSURES AND I WOULD LIKE TO DEAL WITH EACH OF THESE IN TURN.

/DIPLOMATIC

DIPLOMATIC

FIRST OF ALL WE SEEK A PEACEFUL SOLUTION BY DIPLOMATIC EFFORT.

THIS TOO IS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SECURITY COUNCIL  
RESOLUTION.

IN THIS APPROACH WE HAVE BEEN HELPED BY THE WIDESPREAD  
DISAPPROVAL OF THE USE OF FORCE WHICH THE ARGENTINE

AGGRESSION HAS AROUSED ACROSS THE WORLD.

AND ALSO BY THE TIRELESS EFFORTS OF SECRETARY  
OF STATE HAIG WHO HAS NOW PAID TWO VISITS TO THIS  
COUNTRY AND ONE TO BUENOS AIRES.

/ ON HIS FIRST VISIT



ON HIS FIRST VISIT LAST THURSDAY WE IMPRESSED UPON HIM THE GREAT DEPTH OF FEELING ON THIS ISSUE, NOT ONLY OF PARLIAMENT BUT OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE AS A WHOLE.

WE MAY NOT EXPRESS OUR VIEWS IN THE SAME WAY AS THE MASSES GATHERED IN BUENOS AIRES BUT WE FEEL THEM EVERY BIT AS STRONGLY.

INDEED, EVEN MORE PROFOUNDLY - BECAUSE BRITONS ARE INVOLVED. WE MADE CLEAR TO MR. HAIG THAT WITHDRAWAL OF THE INVADERS' TROOPS MUST COME FIRST; THAT THE SOVEREIGNTY OF THE ISLANDS IS NOT AFFECTED BY THE ACT OF INVASION; AND THAT WHEN IT COMES TO FUTURE NEGOTIATIONS: WHAT MATTERS MOST IS WHAT THE FALKLAND ISLANDERS THEMSELVES WISH.

/ ON HIS SECOND

ON HIS SECOND VISIT ON EASTER MONDAY AND YESTERDAY, MR. HAIG  
PUT FORWARD CERTAIN IDEAS AS A BASIS FOR  
DISCUSSION, IDEAS CONCERNING THE WITHDRAWAL  
OF TROOPS AND ITS SUPERVISION, AND AN INTERIM  
PERIOD, DURING WHICH NEGOTIATIONS ON THE FUTURE  
OF THE ISLANDS WOULD BE CONDUCTED.

OUR TALKS WERE LONG AND DETAILED AS THE HOUSE WOULD EXPECT.

SOME THINGS WE COULD NOT CONSIDER BECAUSE THEY  
FLOUTED OUR BASIC PRINCIPLES.

OTHERS WE HAD TO EXAMINE CAREFULLY AND SUGGEST  
ALTERNATIVES.

THE TALKS WERE CONSTRUCTIVE AND SOME PROGRESS  
WAS MADE.

AT THE END OF MONDAY, MR. HAIG WAS PREPARED TO  
RETURN TO BUENOS AIRES IN PURSUIT OF A PEACEFUL  
/ SOLUTION. LATE THAT NIGHT



LATE THAT NIGHT HOWEVER ARGENTINA PUT FORWARD TO HIM OTHER PROPOSALS WHICH COULD NOT POSSIBLE HAVE ACCEPTED. BUT YESTERDAY, THE POSITION APPEARED TO HAVE EASED. FURTHER IDEAS ARE NOW BEING CONSIDERED AND SECRETARY HAIG HAS RETURNED TO WASHINGTON BEFORE PROCEEDING, HE HOPES SHORTLY, TO BUENOS AIRES. THAT MEETING, IN OUR VIEW, WILL BE CRUCIAL.

THESE DISCUSSIONS ARE COMPLEX, CHANGING AND DIFFICULT.

THE MORE SO BECAUSE THEY ARE TAKING PLACE BETWEEN A MILITARY JUNTA AND A DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT OF A FREE PEOPLE - ONE WHICH IS NOT PREPARED TO COMPROMISE THAT DEMOCRACY AND THAT LIBERTY WHICH THE BRITISH FALKLAND ISLANDERS REGARD AS THEIR BIRTHRIGHT.

/ WE SEEK, AND

WE SEEK, AND SHALL CONTINUE TO SEEK, A  
DIPLOMATIC SOLUTION, AND THE HOUSE WILL  
REALISE THAT IT WOULD JEOPARDISE THAT  
AIM WERE I TO GIVE FURTHER DETAILS AT  
THIS STAGE.

INDEED, SECRETARY HAIG HAS BEEN SCRUPULOUS  
IN HIS ADHERENCE TO CONFIDENTIALITY IN  
PURSUIT OF THE LARGER OBJECTIVE.

WE SHALL CONTINUE GENUINELY TO NEGOTIATE,  
THROUGH THE GOOD OFFICES OF MR. HAIG,  
TO WHOSE SKILL AND PERSEVERANCE I PAY  
WARM TRIBUTE.

/ MILITARY



MILITARY

DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS ARE MORE LIKELY TO SUCCEED IF THEY ARE  
BACKED BY MILITARY STRENGTH.

At 5.00 A.M. LONDON TIME ON MONDAY 12 APRIL, THE  
EXCLUSION ZONE OF 200 MILES AROUND THE  
FALKLAND ISLANDS CAME INTO EFFECT.

FROM THAT TIME ANY ARGENTINE WARSHIPS AND ARGENTINE  
NAVAL AUXILIARIES FOUND WITHIN THIS ZONE ARE TREATED  
AS HOSTILE AND ARE LIABLE TO BE ATTACKED BY  
BRITISH FORCES.

WE SEE THIS MEASURE AS THE FIRST STEP TOWARDS  
ACHIEVING THE WITHDRAWAL OF ARGENTINE FORCES

IT APPEARS TO HAVE EXERTED INFLUENCE ON  
ARGENTINA WHOSE NAVY HAS BEEN CONCENTRATED OUTSIDE  
THE ZONE.

/ IF OUR AUTHORITY

IF THE ZONE IS CHALLENGED, WE SHALL TAKE THAT AS  
THE CLEAREST EVIDENCE THAT THE SEARCH  
FOR A PEACEFUL SOLUTION HAS BEEN ABANDONED.  
WE SHALL THEN TAKE THE NECESSARY ACTION.  
LET NO-ONE DOUBT THAT.

THE NAVAL TASK FORCE IS PROCEEDING WITH ALL SPEED TOWARDS  
THE SOUTH ATLANTIC.

IT IS A FORMIDABLE FORCE COMPRISING TWO  
AIRCRAFT CARRIERS, FIVE GUIDED MISSILE DESTROYERS,  
SEVEN FRIGATES, AN ASSAULT SHIP WITH FIVE  
LANDING SHIPS, TOGETHER WITH SUPPORTING  
VESSELS.

/ THE COMPOSITION



THE COMPOSITION OF THE FORCE AND THE SPEED WITH WHICH IT WAS ASSEMBLED AND PUT TO SEA CLEARLY DEMONSTRATE OUR DETERMINATION.

I CAN TELL THE HOUSE THAT MORALE ON BOARD THE SHIPS IN THE TASK FORCE IS VERY HIGH.

THE SHIPS AND AIRCRAFT ARE CARRYING OUT EXERCISES ON PASSAGE AND BY THE TIME THE FORCE ARRIVES OFF THE FALKLANDS, IT WILL BE AT A VERY HIGH STATE OF FIGHTING EFFICIENCY.

A NUMBER OF CIVILIAN SHIPS HAVE NOW BEEN CHARTERED OR REQUISITIONED.

THESE INCLUDE THE CANBERRA FOR USE AS A TROOP SHIP, AND THE UGANDA WHICH WILL BE AVAILABLE AS A HOSPITAL SHIP.

/ RECOURSE TO THE

RECOURSE TO THE MERCHANT MARINE IS TRADITIONAL  
IN TIME OF NAVAL EMERGENCY AND THEIR RESPONSE  
HAS BEEN WHOLEHEARTED ON THIS OCCASION AS IN  
THE PAST.

MEN AND EQUIPMENT CONTINUE TO BE FLOWN OUT TO ASCENSION  
ISLAND TO MEET UP WITH THE TASK FORCE.  
THESE ADDITIONAL ELEMENTS WILL ENHANCE THE  
FIGHTING CAPABILITY OF THE FORCE AND THE  
RANGE OF OPERATIONS WHICH CAN BE UNDERTAKEN.  
NIMROD MARITIME PATROL AIRCRAFT ARE NOW  
PATROLLING THE SOUTH ATLANTIC IN SUPPORT OF  
OUR FLEET.

/ SUSTAINING A MAJOR



SUSTAINING A SUBSTANTIAL FORCE 8000 MILES FROM THE UK  
IS A CONSIDERABLE UNDERTAKING.

AS THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE ANNOUNCED THIS  
MORNING ADDITIONAL MEASURES ARE NOW IN HAND TO  
PROVIDE EXTRA CAPABILITY FOR THE FORCE OVER AN  
EXTENDED PERIOD.

IN PARTICULAR, THE SECOND ASSAULT SHIP,  
HMS INTREPID, IS BEING RECOMMISSIONED FOR  
OPERATIONAL SERVICE.

SHE WILL SIGNIFICANTLY ADD TO THE AMPHIBIOUS  
CAPABILITY OF THE TASK FORCE NOW ENTERING THE  
SOUTH ATLANTIC WHICH ALREADY CONTAINS HER SISTER  
SHIP HMS FEARLESS.

ARRANGEMENTS ARE IN HAND TO ADAPT A LARGE CARGO  
SHIP FOR THE SEA LIFT OF ADDITIONAL HARRIERS.

/ THIS WILL

THIS WILL NEARLY DOUBLE THE SIZE OF THE HARRIER  
FORCE IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC.

ALL THESE AIRCRAFT HAVE A FORMIDABLE AIR COMBAT  
AND GROUND ATTACK CAPABILITY.

OUR DIPLOMACY IS BACKED BY STRENGTH, AND WE HAVE  
THE RESOLVE TO USE THAT STRENGTH IF NECESSARY.

/ ECONOMIC



ECONOMIC

THE THIRD ASPECT OF OUR PRESSURE AGAINST ARGENTINA  
HAS BEEN ECONOMIC.

WE HAVE BEEN URGING OUR FRIENDS AND ALLIES  
TO TAKE ACTION PARALLEL TO OUR OWN.

WE HAVE ACHIEVED A HEARTENING DEGREE OF  
SUCCESS.

THE MOST SIGNIFICANT MEASURE HAS BEEN THE DECISION  
OF OUR NINE PARTNERS IN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY  
TO JOIN US NOT JUST IN AN ARMS EMBARGO BUT  
ALSO IN STOPPING ALL IMPORTS FROM ARGENTINA.

/THIS IS

THIS IS A VERY IMPORTANT STEP, UNPRECEDENTED  
IN ITS SCOPE AND THE RAPIDITY OF THE DECISION.  
LAST YEAR ABOUT A-QUARTER OF ALL ARGENTINA'S  
EXPORTS WENT TO THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY.  
THE EFFECT ON ARGENTINA'S ECONOMY OF THIS  
MEASURE WILL THEREFORE BE CONSIDERABLE AND  
CANNOT BE WITHOUT INFLUENCE ON HER LEADERS  
IN THE PRESENT CRISIS.

I SHOULD LIKE WARMLY TO THANK OUR EUROPEAN PARTNERS  
FOR RALLYING TO OUR SUPPORT.  
IT WAS AN EFFECTIVE DEMONSTRATION OF  
COMMUNITY-SOLIDARITY.

/THE DECISION



THE DECISION CANNOT HAVE BEEN EASY FOR OUR PARTNERS, GIVEN THE COMMERCIAL INTERESTS AT STAKE.

BUT THEY WERE THE FIRST TO REALISE THAT IF AGGRESSION WERE ALLOWED TO SUCCEED IN THE FALKLAND ISLANDS, IT WOULD BE ENCOURAGED THE WORLD OVER.

OTHER FRIENDS TOO HAVE BEEN QUICK TO HELP.

I SHOULD LIKE TO THANK AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND AND CANADA FOR THEIR STURDY AND SWIFT ACTION. THEY HAVE DECIDED TO BAN IMPORTS FROM ARGENTINA, TO STOP EXPORT CREDITS AND TO HALT ALL SALES OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT.

/ NEW ZEALAND

NEW ZEALAND HAS ALSO BANNED EXPORTS TO

ARGENTINA.

WE ARE GRATEFUL ALSO TO

MANY OTHER COUNTRIES IN THE COMMONWEALTH WHO

HAVE SUPPORTED US BY CONDEMNING THE ARGENTINE

INVASION.

ISOLATION OF ARGENTINA

WHAT HAVE THE ARGENTINES BEEN ABLE TO PRODUCE TO

BALANCE THIS SOLIDARITY IN SUPPORT OF OUR CAUSE?

COUNTRIES

SOME LATIN AMERICAN / HAVE OF COURSE REPEATED

THEIR SUPPORT FOR THE ARGENTINE CLAIM TO

SOVEREIGNTY.

WE ALWAYS KNEW THEY WOULD.

/BUT ONLY



BUT ONLY ONE OF THEM HAS SUPPORTED THE ARGENTINE  
INVASION AND NEARLY ALL HAVE MADE CLEAR THEIR DIS-  
AND DISAPPROVAL THAT ARGENTINA SHOULD HAVE  
RESORTED TO AGGRESSION.

ALMOST THE ONLY COUNTRY WHOSE POSITION HAS BEEN SHIFTING  
TOWARDS ARGENTINA IS THE SOVIET UNION.

WE CAN ONLY GUESS AT THE / <sup>CYNICAL</sup> CALCULATIONS WHICH  
LIE BEHIND THIS MOVE.

BUT SOVIET SUPPORT FOR ARGENTINA IS HARDLY  
LIKELY TO SHAKE THE WORLD'S CONFIDENCE IN THE  
JUSTICE OF OUR CAUSE AND WILL NOT ALTER OUR  
DETERMINATION TO ACHIEVE OUR OBJECTIVES.

/ BRITISH SUBJECTS

BRITISH SUBJECTS

ONE OF OUR FIRST CONCERNS HAS BEEN AND REMAINS

THE SAFETY OF THE BRITISH SUBJECTS WHO  
HAVE BEEN CAUGHT UP IN THE CONSEQUENCES  
OF THE CRISIS.

THEY INCLUDE (APART FROM THE FALKLAND  
ISLANDERS THEMSELVES) THE MARINES AND  
THE BRITISH ANTARCTIC SURVEY SCIENTISTS  
ON SOUTH GEORGIA AND THE BRITISH COMMUNITY  
IN ARGENTINA.

/ IN SPITE



IN SPITE OF ALL OUR EFFORTS WE HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE

TO SECURE RELIABLE INFORMATION ABOUT THE

22 MARINES WHO WERE ON SOUTH GEORGIA AND THE

13 BRITISH ANTARCTIC SURVEY PERSONNEL WHO

ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN EVACUATED FROM "SANTVIKEN"

AT THE SAME TIME.

ACCORDING TO ARGENTINE REPORTS THESE PEOPLE ARE ON

A SHIP HEADING FOR THE MAINLAND.

THERE ARE ALSO REPORTS THAT THE SIX MARINES AND

THE ONE MEMBER OF THE CREW OF ENDURANCE WHO WERE

CAPTURED ON THE FALKLAND ISLANDS ARE NOW IN

ARGENTINA.

/ FINALLY, THERE

FINALLY, THERE ARE 13 MEMBERS OF THE BRITISH ANTARCTIC SURVEY TEAM AND TWO OTHER BRITISH SUBJECTS WHO REMAIN ON SOUTH GEORGIA.

THE SURVEY TEAM'S MOST RECENT CONTACTS, ON 12 APRIL, WITH THEIR HEADQUARTERS IN THIS COUNTRY INDICATE THAT THEY ARE SAFE AND WELL.

ON 5 APRIL, WE ASKED THE SWISS GOVERNMENT, AS THE PROTECTING POWER, TO PURSUE ALL THESE CASES URGENTLY WITH THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT.

WE TRUST THEIR EFFORTS WILL SOON PRODUCE THE INFORMATION WHICH WE AND THEIR FAMILIES ANXIOUSLY SEEK.

/ON THE SAME



ON THE SAME DAY WE ALSO SOUGHT THE ASSISTANCE OF THE  
INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS WITH REGARD TO THE  
POSITION ON THE FALKLAND ISLANDS.

SO FAR THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT HAS NOT RESPONDED  
TO THEIR REQUEST TO VISIT THE ISLANDS.

LATE LAST NIGHT, A PARTY OF 35 PEOPLE FROM THE ISLANDS,  
INCLUDING THE CHIEF SECRETARY, ARRIVED IN  
MONTEVIDEO AND A REPORT FROM THE CHIEF  
SECRETARY ON CONDITIONS IN THE ISLANDS IS  
EXPECTED AT ANY MOMENT.

/ RECENTLY, THE GOVERNMENT

THE GOVERNMENT  
RECENTLY / RECEIVED A MESSAGE FROM THE BRITISH

COMMUNITY COUNCIL IN ARGENTINA URGING A  
PEACEFUL SOLUTION TO THE PRESENT CONFLICT  
AND ASKING THAT DUE CONSIDERATION BE  
TO THE STRONG BRITISH PRESENCE IN ARGENTINA  
AND THE SIZE OF THE BRITISH COMMUNITY

WE HAVE REPLIED, RECOGNISING THE CONTRIBUTION  
WHICH THE BRITISH COMMUNITY HAS MADE TO  
THE DEVELOPMENT OF ARGENTINA - BUT MAKING  
IT PLAIN THAT WE HAVE A DUTY TO RESPOND  
TO THE UNPROVOKED AGGRESSION

AGAINST THE FALKLAND ISLANDS  
AND INSISTING THAT ARGENTINA SHOULD COMPLY WITH  
THE MANDATORY RESOLUTION OF THE  
SECURITY COUNCIL CALLING UPON IT  
TO WITHDRAW ITS TROOPS.

/WE ARE



WE ARE ALSO BEING URGED FROM SOME QUARTERS TO AVOID ARMED

CONFRONTATION AT ALL COSTS AND TO SEEK CONCILIATION.

OF COURSE WE TOO WANT A PEACEFUL SOLUTION BUT IT WAS

NOT BRITAIN WHO BROKE THE PEACE.

IF THE ARGUMENT OF NO FORCE AT ANY PRICE WERE

TO BE ADOPTED AT THIS STAGE IT WOULD SERVE ONLY

TO PERPETUATE THE OCCUPATION OF THOSE VERY

TERRITORIES WHICH HAVE THEMSELVES BEEN SEIZED

BY FORCE.

/ CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

MR. SPEAKER,

IN ANY NEGOTIATIONS OVER THE COMING DAYS WE SHALL BE  
GUIDED BY THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES,

WE SHALL CONTINUE TO INSIST ON ARGENTINE WITH-

DRAWAL FROM THE FALKLAND ISLANDS AND DEPENDENCIES.

WE SHALL REMAIN READY TO EXERCISE OUR RIGHT TO  
RESORT TO FORCE IN SELF-DEFENCE UNDER ARTICLE 51  
OF THE UN CHARTER UNTIL THE OCCUPYING FORCES  
LEAVE THE ISLANDS.

OUR NAVAL TASK FORCE SAILS ON TOWARDS ITS  
DESTINATION.

WE REMAIN FULLY CONFIDENT OF ITS ABILITY TO  
TAKE WHATEVER MEASURES MAY BE NECESSARY.

/ MEANWHILE, ITS VE



MEANWHILE, ITS VERY EXISTENCE AND ITS PROGRESS  
TOWARDS THE FALKLAND ISLANDS REINFORCE THE  
EFFORTS WE ARE MAKING FOR A DIPLOMATIC SOLUTION.

THAT SOLUTION MUST SAFEGUARD THE PRINCIPLE THAT THE

OF THE ISLANDERS SHALL REMAIN PARAMOUNT.

THERE IS NO REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THEY WOULD  
PREFER ANY ALTERNATIVE TO THE RESUMPTION OF THE  
ADMINISTRATION WHICH THEY ENJOYED BEFORE ARGENTINA  
COMMITTED AGGRESSION.

IT MAY BE THAT THEIR RECENT EXPERIENCES WILL  
HAVE CAUSED THEIR VIEWS ON THE FUTURE TO CHANGE.

BUT UNTIL THEY HAVE HAD THE CHANCE  
FREELY TO EXPRESS THEIR VIEWS, THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT  
WILL NOT ASSUME THAT THE ISLANDERS WISHES ARE  
DIFFERENT FROM WHAT THEY WERE BEFORE.

/ WE HAVE A LONG

WE HAVE A LONG AND PROUD HISTORY OF RECOGNISING THE RIGHT  
OF OTHERS TO DETERMINE THEIR OWN DESTINY.

INDEED IN THAT RESPECT WE HAVE AN EXPERIENCE  
UNRIVALLED BY ANY OTHER NATION IN THE WORLD.  
BUT THAT RIGHT MUST BE UPHOLD UNIVERSALLY, AND  
NOT LEAST WHERE IT IS CHALLENGED BY THOSE WHO  
ARE HARDLY CONSPICUOUS FOR THEIR OWN DEVOTION TO  
DEMOCRACY AND LIBERTY.

THE EYES OF THE WORLD ARE NOW FOCUSED UPON THE FALKLAND  
ISLANDS.

OTHERS ARE WATCHING ANXIOUSLY TO SEE WHETHER  
BRUTE FORCE OR THE RULE OF LAW WILL TRIUMPH.  
WHEREVER NAKED AGGRESSION OCCURS IT MUST BE  
OVERCOME.

/ THE COST NOW,



THE COST NOW, HOWEVER HIGH, MUST BE SET  
AGAINST THE COST WE WOULD ONE DAY HAVE TO PAY  
IF THIS PRINCIPLE WENT BY DEFAULT.

AND THAT IS WHY THROUGH DIPLOMATIC, ECONOMIC AND IF  
NECESSARY THROUGH MILITARY MEANS, WE SHALL  
PERSEVERE UNTIL FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY ARE  
RESTORED TO THE PEOPLE OF THE FALKLAND ISLANDS.