

CONFIDENTIAL

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10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

14 April 1982

Falkland Islands: Prime Minister's Speech

I enclose the latest draft of the Prime Minister's speech for today's House of Commons debate. I should be most grateful if it could be carefully checked and any comments sent to me by 1100 hours.

In particular, I should be grateful if both you and the MOD would check carefully for factual accuracy the passage entitled "British subjects". Last night I asked the Emergency Unit to check with BAS headquarters in Cambridge their most recent information about the people on South Georgia (I understand that they are regularly in touch with them).

I am copying this letter and the enclosure to David Omand (Ministry of Defence).

A. J. COLES

John Holmes, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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Mr. Speaker,

It is right that at this time of grave concern over the Falkland Islands and their people, we should be recalled so that the Government may report and the House may discuss the latest developments.

*Objective*

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 <sup>own</sup> way of life and their <sup>own</sup> future. The wishes of the Islanders must be paramount. But they cannot be freely expressed <sup>let-alone</sup> and implemented while the present illegal Argentine occupation continues. That is why our immediate goal in recent days has been to secure the removal of all Argentine forces in accordance with Resolution 502 of the United Nations Security Council.

*Strategy.*

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

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c) Diplomatic

First of all we seek a peaceful solution by diplomatic effort. In this we have been helped by the widespread disapproval of the use of force which the aggression of the Argentines 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 last Thursday we ~~were able~~ <sup>ed</sup> ~~to~~ impress 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 to hear the speeches of dictators, ~~and thank goodness we don't~~, but we feel them every bit as strongly. Indeed, even more profoundly. We made clear that withdrawal of the invaders' troops must come first; that the sovereignty of the Islands <sup>and cannot</sup> is not <sup>^</sup> affected by invasion; and that when it comes to future negotiations what matters most is what the Falkland Islanders themselves wish.

On his second visit on Easter Monday and yesterday, Mr. Haig put forward certain ideas as a basis for discussion. Ideas which spanned the time from the withdrawal of troops and its supervision to the conclusion of negotiations on the future of the Islands.

/ Our talks were

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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 variations. These talks were constructed <sup>ide</sup> and some progress was made. At the end of the day, Mr. Haig was prepared to return to Buenos Aires in pursuit of a peaceful solution.

*Late that evening Argentina put forward other proposals which gave rise to real difficulties*

~~Yesterday it seemed that the Argentine position was not exactly as had been understood. Further ideas are now being considered and Secretary Haig has returned to Washington before proceeding shortly to Buenos Aires.~~

*difficulties* These discussions are complex, <sup>changing</sup> ~~various~~ and ~~changing~~. 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 regarded as their birthright. We seek, and 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.

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MILITARY

*if they are backed by military strength*  
*Diplomatic efforts are more likely to succeed*

At 5.00 a.m. London time on Monday 12 April, the military exclusion zone of 200 miles around the Falkland Islands came into effect. From that time all Argentine warships and Argentine auxiliaries found within this zone will be 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 from the area. It appears to have exerted influence on Argentina whose navy has been concentrated outside the zone. If our authority in the zone is challenged, we shall take that as a sign that the search for a peaceful solution has been abandoned. We shall have to 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 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 extremely high. ~~Ships' companies are being regularly put through their operational paces and the ships are exercising together en route.~~  
*Ships are carrying out exercises en route and carrying out exercises*

By the time the Force arrives off the Falklands, it will be at a very high state of fighting efficiency.

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A number of civil <sup>ian</sup> ships have now been chartered or requisitioned ~~to augment and improve logistic support.~~ These include ~~a number of tankers, roll-on roll-off ferries,~~ the Canberra for use as a troop ship, and the Uganda which will be available as a hospital ship. Recourse to the merchant marine is traditional in time of naval emergency and their response has been ~~as~~ 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 Task Force and the range of operations which can be undertaken. Nimrod Maritime Patrol Aircraft are now patrolling <sup>the</sup> South Atlantic in support of our naval deployments.

Check.

Sustaining a <sup>major</sup> ~~substantial~~ Force at 8,000 miles distance from the UK is a considerable undertaking. But 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 made ready for sailing, if necessary. Arrangements are in hand to ~~adapt a large~~ <sup>send</sup> ~~container ship for the carriage of~~ additional Sea and Ground attack Harriers ~~(which in the latter case would be flown by the RAF)~~. This will double the size of the Harrier force in the South Atlantic.

Our diplomacy is backed by strength, <sup>and we have the</sup> ~~We intend to secure~~ ~~our objectives.~~ <sup>resolve to use that strength if necessary</sup> ~~if necessary~~ in order to achieve our objectives

ECONOMIC

The other 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 a very important step, unprecedented in its scope and the rapidity of the decision. Last year nearly one-third 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 one of the <sup>advantages</sup> ~~values~~ of <sup>Community</sup> membership. The decision cannot have been easy for them, given the commercial interests at stake. But our partners were <sup>the first-</sup> ~~quick~~ to realise that if aggression were allowed to succeed in the Falkland Islands, it would be encouraged elsewhere.

/ Other friends

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Other friends too have been quick to help. I should like to thank Australia, New Zealand and Canada for their <sup>shrewdly</sup> ~~firm~~ 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 has also banned exports to Argentina. Many other countries in the Commonwealth 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? <sup>?</sup> ~~from the United Nations, the EEC and the Commonwealth?~~

*Some*  
~~Most of~~

Their Latin American neighbours have of course repeated their support for the Argentine claim to sovereignty. We always knew they would. But <sup>only</sup> ~~not~~ one of them has supported the Argentine invasion and many have made clear their distaste and disapproval that Argentina should have resorted to aggression.

(Panama)

*Almost*

~~About~~ the only country whose position has been shifting towards Argentina is the Soviet Union. We can only guess <sup>at the cold calculations which</sup> ~~what dark and complicated reasoning lies~~ behind this move. But Soviet support for Argentina is hardly likely to shake the world's confidence in the justice of our cause or in our ability to achieve our objectives.

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BRITISH SUBJECTS

*Amman*

One of our first concerns has been and ~~is~~ for the safety of the British subjects who through no fault of their own have been caught up in the consequences of the crisis. They include <sup>(as well as the Falkland Islanders themselves)</sup> the Marines and the British Antarctic scientists on South Georgia, the British community in Argentina, ~~and of course the Falkland Islanders themselves.~~

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BRITISH SUBJECTS

One of our first concerns has been and is for the safety of the British subjects who through no fault of their own have been caught up in the consequences of the crisis. They include the marines and the British Antarctic scientists on South Georgia and the British community in Argentina.

*In view of all our efforts we have not been able to secure*  
~~The Government are most concerned at the absence of~~  
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 by the Argentines at the same time. According to Argentine reports these people are on a ship bound for Montevideo ~~but I cannot confirm that this is so.~~ There are also ~~unsubstantiated~~ reports to the effect that the 6 marines and the one member of the crew of Endurance who were said to have been captured on the Falkland Islands are now in Argentina. Finally, there are other members of the British Antarctic survey team who remain on South Georgia. *and his sister is a British subject.* Their most recent contacts with their headquarters in this country *indirectly* ~~suggest~~ that they are safe and well.

*On* ~~The Government have~~ asked the International Red Cross to pursue all these cases with the Argentine Government. We trust ~~that the~~ <sup>efforts</sup> of the Red Cross will soon produce the information which we lack. *we are then finishing urgently* ~~The House will understand that given the breach of diplomatic relations with Argentina, and the Argentine occupation of the Falklands, our own ability to obtain direct and reliable information is very limited.~~ Where appropriate, the Swiss Embassy, who are looking after our interests in Buenos Aires will be seeking assurances about the safety of all these British subjects.

/The Government

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~~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 given 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 by the Argentine Government against the Falkland Islands and insisting that Argentina should respond to the mandatory resolution of the United Nations Security Council calling upon it to withdraw its troops.

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also.

Mr. Speaker, we are being urged from many sides above all to avoid armed confrontation and to seek conciliation. Of course we want a peaceful solution but it was not Britain who broke the peace. (Force has been used by Argentina and a people subjugated.) If the concept of no force at any price is to be used at this stage it would serve <sup>only</sup> to ~~protect and preserve~~ <sup>the</sup> an occupation of those very territories which have themselves been seized by force.

→ (B)  
 link on  
 page 13.

Wherever naked aggression occurs it must be overcome. The cost now, however high, must be set against the cost we would one day have to pay if this principle went by default. (If we forfeit the right of British subjects to determine their own future on the Falklands, there are territories in South and Central America, in Africa, indeed all over the world, that would be in danger of attack.)

We can hardly maintain that aggression must be resisted in Western Europe with all the forces at NATO's command, if it were condoned in the South Atlantic off the coast of Argentina.

Mr. Speaker.

Conclusion

Summary

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In our negotiations over the coming days we shall be guided by the following principles.

We shall continue to insist on complete Argentine withdrawal from the Falkland Islands and dependencies. We shall remain ready to exercise our right to resort to force in self-defence <sup>under Article 51</sup> 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 very existence and its progress towards the Falkland Islands reinforce the efforts we are making for a diplomatic solution.

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In that solution the wishes of the Islanders remain paramount. There is no reason to believe that they would prefer any alternative to the resumption of the ~~type~~ of administration which they enjoyed before Argentine committed aggression. It may be that their recent experiences will have caused their views on the future to change. But unless and until they have had the chance freely to express their view the British Government have no intention of assuming that the Islanders' wishes are different from what they were before.

For 150 years, the Falkland Islands have been British until the Argentine invasion on 2 April, British sovereignty, British administration, and British occupation of the Islands had been undisturbed.

During the past century, the United Kingdom has seeded sovereignty over vast areas of the world; that session of sovereignty has been granted at the express wish of the inhabitants of our former colonies and protectorships. Over and over again, Her Majesty's Government has made it plain that the wishes of the Falkland Islanders are paramount. If they wish to change the sovereignty of their Islands, that is a matter which would have to be decided by this House.

But all the evidence confirms that the Islanders wish to remain British, under British administration.

That wish has been flouted by the Argentine occupation, which was preceded by a military assault upon British territory. That assault was not simply against a small and peaceful community in a distant part of the world; it was, too, a violation of international law; and the continuing alien occupation of the Falklands is in defiance of a Resolution of the Security Council, to which Argentina, like the United Kingdom, owes obedience.

/But there

But there is another factor of equal importance; the right of the Islanders themselves to choose their own allegiance and their own form of government.

Mr. Innes

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We have a long and proud <sup>history</sup> ~~history~~ of recognising

the right of others to determine their own destiny.

*indeed we have an experience unrivalled by any other nation*

But that right must be upheld universally, and notably

where it is challenged by those who are <sup>(not known)</sup> ~~not~~ conspicuous

*in the world*

for their devotion to democracy and liberty. <sup>hardly</sup>

The eyes of the world are now focussed upon the Falkland Islands. Others are watching anxiously to see whether the rule of law or whether brute force will triumph.

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*Intend B.*

~~If brute force should be allowed to triumph~~

~~in the South Atlantic which other small countries will be in peril?~~

~~There may be some, even in this House, who believe that we should abandon the Falkland Islanders to military occupation and alien rule. That is not the belief of Her Majesty's Government.~~

And that is why we shall continue, through diplomatic, economic, and if necessary through military means, to secure for the people of the Falkland Islands that same freedom of choice which we have conferred upon others and which we shall continue to uphold for them.

