

213

A fairly encouraging outcome. But still some firmly embedded opposition

Mr Fearn

FALKLAND ISLANDS: MR RIDLEY'S MEETING WITH CONSERVATIVE PARTY FOREIGN AFFAIRS GROUP

1. Thank you for the speaking notes you provided for Mr Ridley's meeting with this group yesterday. He was encouraged by the response he received, and has written the attached notes on the course of the meeting.

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*[Handwritten signature]*

K D Temple  
PS/Mr Ridley

10 December 1980

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

*[Handwritten notes and signatures]*  
RHS 11/12  
Mr Syrett  
Mr [unclear]  
CES  
11/12

*[Handwritten notes and signatures]*  
Mr [unclear]  
CES  
11/12

MEETING OF PARTY FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE: TUESDAY 9 DECEMBER

present about 40 - dwindling.

I spoke for about 15 minutes, putting the case in some detail, and stressing that it was for the Islanders to decide.

Speakers, in order, were:-

Bernard Braine An extremely strong tirade, very ill-informed and uncompromising, despite his previous argument with me that it was the Islanders' views that mattered.

Alan Clark Very bitter. He urged a third alternative: to start fishing and oil exploration and tell Argentine to go away.

Nicholas Bonsor Suffering under total misconception - talked of giving the Islands away. Very strong.

John Farr Also strong - much on the same lines as Alan Clark

Anthony Kershaw Very brief - simply said there was a great deal of sense in what I had said. This further punctured the enemy, and the sympathies of the body of the audience seemed to crystallize in favour of Government, or so it seemed. A number of people left at this time and did not come back.

Ray Whitney spoke strongly in favour, and dwelt (with experience) on the difficulties of supply, and defence, in the event of a break with the Argentine.

Trevor Skeet asked about oil, and the security necessary for oil companies to drill.

Percy Grieve asked about our legal title, and whether the ICJ could not decide the issue.

John Townend expressed concern that we could not trust the Argentines.

Julian Amery said that his views were more important than those of the Islanders, and in his view the overriding strategic importance of the Islands meant we must keep them.

In addition and in general there was some pressure to concede on nationality, and to make more money available for development of the Islands. There was also oft repeated the idea that this was a Foreign Office plan that we were

/...

gullible enough to have fallen for.

Geoffrey Rippon, John Peyton, Tony Kershaw, Ian Grist, and a number of others who did not speak were strongly supportive and impatient at the jingoist and unrealistic attitude of the 6 who spoke strongly against. I had the feeling that they got a little out on a limb, and that the meeting was much more broadly content than the House had been at the time of my statement on 2 December. On the other hand, Richard Page (who did not speak) was reported to me to be unhappy afterwards.

Minister

2:11

Mr Fearn

Thank you.

RR. 10/12

Tuesday: 4.15 p.m.

PS/Mr Ridley

CC  
PS  
PS/LPS  
PS/PUS  
Mr Day o.r.  
Mr Harding o.r.

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FALKLAND ISLANDS: MEETING WITH CONSERVATIVE PARTY FOREIGN AFFAIRS GROUP: 9 DECEMBER 1980

1. Mr Ridley will be talking to the Conservative Party Foreign Affairs Group at 4.15 p.m. on 9 December about the Falkland Islands and his recent visit. As discussed, I submit a list of points to make and points to avoid.
2. The list may also serve for Mr Ridley's meeting with Lord Shackleton at 5.00 p.m. on 8 December, which I shall attend.

See 212

*P. R. Fearn*

P R Fearn  
South America Dept.

5 December 1980

*Mr Davies  
to PA  
ced  
10/12*

*by flight  
10/12*

FALKLAND ISLANDS

*Reason for timing of initiative*

## POINTS TO MAKE

1. No doubts about British sovereignty; but Argentine claim exists and will not go away.
2. Dispute overshadows Islanders' everyday lives, blights economy and prevents development. Have to ensure their future.
3. Choice between telling Argentina to go away and looking for possible bases for a solution. No easy answer.
4. Islanders' wishes paramount. It is their future and they must decide. Therefore essential to go and consult Islanders fully on how best to proceed.
5. Islanders are understandably apprehensive about change. But recognition of 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.

/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. [<sup>Will speak</sup> Have spoken] to Home Secretary about nationality problems - he is examining.

11. Cannot forecast Argentine response if Islanders turn ideas down, but Argentines could obviously make life more difficult for Falklanders. (NB. Important to avoid impression that we have been pressurising Islanders by scare-mongering about future Argentine tactics.)

POINTS TO AVOID

12. Predictions of Islanders' likely response.
13. Detailed speculation about Argentine views or responses.
14. Details of possible oil/fisheries regime.