

LOBBY BRIEFING

time: 11.30 date: 2.4.82

PRIME MINISTER'S DAY

The Prime Minister is working in No 10 all day. She was not now going to Finchley.

CABINET

At 9.45am she chaired a meeting of the Cabinet to consider the Falkland Islands situation. Present: All except S/S Education, N.Ireland, Minister of Ag and Fish, S/S Scotland, Chief Secretary. Also present Chief of Air Staff and First Sea Lord.

The PM is due to spend the weekend at Chequers.

IN THE HOUSE

STATEMENT

At 11.00am a Statement from the Lord Privy Seal on the Falklands situation.

ANSWERS OF INTEREST

No 5 Written 12.00 noon: Mr John Mackay to ask S/S Employment whether he is now in a position to make a statement about the future of the underwater training centre at Fort William. (Answer will indicate that no more public funding will be provided).

No 79 Written 12.00noon: Mr Tim Eggar to ask S/S Industry what is the last date on which companies in those assisted areas which will become non-assisted on 1 August may make application for regional selective assistance under section 7 of the Industry Act 1972. (Answer will indicate that DoI must have applications by 30 April from companies in areas affected).

D/En will announce at 12.00 noon by Press Notice details of CEBG appointments. (see attached note).

NOTE: The PM's meeting with the Mayor of Berlin, scheduled for 11.15am was cancelled.

The White Paper list was distributed.

FALKLANDS

We could not confirm reports of any invasion. We could not say if we would be at war with Argentina in the event of an invasion. We pointed out that such an action by the Argentines would be in total contravention of the Statement by the President of the Security Council. The Argentine Ambassador had not responded to the President's Statement.

Cabinet lasted one hour and the situation concerning the Falklands was the only subject. It was essentially an opportunity for the reports to be made on the situation: the Foreign Secretary was the main rapporteur. The report from the Governor referred to. The LPS's Statement was received whilst Cabinet was in progress.

We were not prepared to comment on any ship or troop deployments. We said that there were a total of 80 marines plus 4 officers in the Falklands. We were not prepared to say how they were deployed.

Our Ambassador in Buenos Aires was in contact with the British community. We could not say how many British subjects there were.

We were not aware of any contact between the PM and President Reagan but pointed out that we were in close touch with the Americans.

It had been the PM's intention to overnight at Windsor last night but she came back to No 10 at 11.00pm for a Meeting of Ministers. She was not woken up during the night although Ministers would have been summoned during the night for this morning's Cabinet.

Yesterday Ministers were in touch throughout the day about the situation; it would have been considered by Cabinet but the decision to go to the Security Council would not necessarily have been taken by Cabinet but most likely by Cabinet Committee. Secretary General of the UN summoned the UK representative and the Argentine representative separately and called on both countries to resolve their differences through diplomacy. Later in the day when we had reason to believe there was an immediate and serious risk of an Argentine invasion we sought an emergency meeting of the Security Council.

FCO 12.30 News Conference (some useful points that we made "on the record")

The FCO denied an earlier report on "Oracle" which stated that the FO had confirmed an invasion. FCO had no confirmation of an invasion although there were indications that an invasion was imminent.

FCO had been in touch on several occasions over the past few days with the Argentine Charge d'Affaires but had had no contact with him since the Argentine Government had rejected our offer yesterday to send an emissary.

Our Ambassador in Buenos Aires had issued appropriate advice to the British community (17,000 British subjects) in Argentina. The FCO was also in touch with British Airways and had given advice on the situation. The decision whether or not to continue flights to and from Argentina was a decision for the airline. Radio communication between UK and the Falklands was frequently difficult.

Lord Carrington saw the PM last night.

No final decision had been taken on whether or not Lord Carrington would attend Saturday's special meeting in Luxembourg of Community Foreign Ministers. His presence looked unlikely but the UK would be represented.

IK