

1pm Lobby April 5

FALKLANDS

No ministerial meetings scheduled for tonight. The Prime Minister, though, obviously talked to colleagues after the debate. A meeting of ministers was not likely on Sunday and probably the next meeting would be on Monday.

Lord Carrington and Mr Nott had talked to the Conservative backbench defence committee. They were not expected to come and see the Prime Minister at No 10. There was no question of heads rolling. This was a time for the government to unite and give full backing to the task force that was sailing. It was a time to draw together as a government.

There was likely to be a debate in government time next week. Not likely on Monday but perhaps a debate on Tuesday or Wednesday. No terms of reference for the debate yet. There was no question of the Northern Ireland statement being put aside to make way for this debate.

We had nothing to add on the current status of Endurance or the marines in South Georgia.

The PM had made clear that a task force was going to sail subject to orders. The object was to rid the Falkland Island of invaders. It was, of course, plain that to pull the trigger was the last thing the government wanted to do. We did not intend to discuss the timing ~~xxxxxx~~ or movement of ships involved in the task force. Suffice it to say that the force would move in good order if at different speeds.

We could offer no details on the welcome that might be given to the marines and the governor when they arrived in UK. The Foreign Secs expectation of their arrival on Sunday was perhaps optimistic. They might well arrive early next week.

We had no evidence of who inflicted casualties on the Argentinian forces - the marines or the Falkland defence forces. We had no evidence of casualties among the Falkland defence forces.

The export of all military equipment to Argentina had been formally stopped. So had the sale of aircraft parts. But this did not mean a total ending of all trade. There was a total freeze on all Argentinian assets in this country governmental and civilian.

On communications it was totally unfair to complain about the pos invasion breakdown between the Falkland authorities and the UK. If there is an ~~xxxx~~ invasion inevitably the first thing that goes is communication.

On Fleet movements it was so ally impractical of critics to expect that a task force should always be on station in the Falklands to deter the Argentinians. The facts of geography cannot be altered.

Endurance as a military unit was of little real effect. She had achieved a mythical significance out of all proportion with the reality of her military power.

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reality