

PRESS DIGEST - SUNDAY 4 APRIL

The Falkland Islands dominate the Press as the Government faced its worst crisis since the election.

News

Reports that 7 Royal Marines are fighting on outside the capital; islanders fear being taken hostage if we invade. Expect to be evacuated to Britain if they remain under Argentinian rule.

Prince Andrew joins the Invincible; a task force of 36 ships being assembled with 1,000 marines plus troops; Argentine forces will be outnumbered two to one; rendezvousing at Ascension; Submarine Superb report detected off Argentina; has the Endurance been taken by the Argentine navy? Chilean navy reported to be ready to defer taking over a destroyer from the Royal Navy; Marines and Governor being flown home today.

We freeze £833 million of Argentina's assets. UN Security Council backs us 10 to 1; Russia abstains and only Panama votes against.

Spurs/Argentina footballer Ardiles booed in top semi-final. Two arrested for throwing corned beef cans through the Argentine Embassy windows.

Political News

Government felt to have suffered Parliamentary humiliation and press puts the futures of Lord Carrington, Humphrey Atkins and John Nott in doubt; charges of neglect, incompetence and even betrayal, manana over the preparations of our task force.

Express says heads will roll; speculation that Mr. Whitelaw will go to Defence and Mr. Pym to the Foreign Office.

Select Committee on Foreign Affairs to start its own investigation tomorrow.

Telegraph has serious doubts about what our forces can do to recover the Falklands.

Sunday Times - Hugo Young says that to judge from the tenor of almost every speech, ready to unite behind not only an invasion of the Falklands but the sinking of the Argentine Navy and the bombing of Buenos Aires. The possibility of The Queen making a broadcast to the Falklands is being considered.

A feature says the humiliating surrender was achieved with almost breathtaking ease; why were we so ill-prepared since the signs were unmistakable.

Comment

Most leaders are unhelpful to say the least apart from the Sunday Times which says you did the best job you could in the House; at the end of two weeks steaming time the Government will be faced with some hard decisions but we are now on the soundest moral ground and it will be important to stay on it.

People - your handling soft; the iron lady should be re-named the jelly baby; you should go with Lord Carrington and John Nott who are directly responsible; the Navy has to be used and force in the end may be necessary. But you can no longer be trusted to carry out this difficult and dangerous operation.

Mirror - imagine the row from Tory sources if a Labour Government had been responsible for this monumental failure. A fascist dictator has rubbed our noses in it. Woodrow Wyatt - you cannot rescue the islanders through the UN; the Royal Navy must go; we must have sunk pretty far if we cannot prevent the Falklands from being colonised.

News of the World - the outraged British people will not be satisfied by your lame attempt to explain the fiasco; the two most closely concerned should be asked to resign. Admiral Hill Norton says it would never have arisen had there been a naval maritime force in the area.

Express - it is not only humiliating Britain but calls into question our defence policy. Our naval strategy is wrong. George Brown says the Tories don't seem to know how to run a combined foreign and defence policy to protect British interests - the second failure in 25 years; Lord Carrington and Nott should be impeached. John Junor sarcastically hopes Lord Carrington and John Nott have the guts to defend the Isle of Man.

Telegraph - your caution about the orders to be given to the task force is wise - this fiasco must not be compounded by a disaster. Can we allow a traditional trident to be blunted by buying a new Trident.

Observer - a naval blockade would provide negotiating room. The whole affair remains a salutary lesson in the nature of power in the modern world. Both Lord Carrington and Mr. Nott are open to censure for having misjudged the temper of the junta.

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