

LOBBY BRIEFING

time: 11 AM date: 6.4.82

PRIME MINISTER'S DAY

The Prime Minister is working in No 10 most of the day.

CABINET

At 10.00 am the Prime Minister chaired a meeting of the Cabinet. [Parliamentary Affairs, Foreign Affairs, Falkland Islands, Community Affairs, Defence White Paper, International Conference Centre.] All present except Mr Tebbit at the Informal Meeting of EC Employment Ministers in Brussels.

QUESTIONS

This afternoon at 3.15 pm the Prime Minister will be in the House for Questions.

MR ULF ADELSON

At 5.30 pm at No 10 the Prime Minister will welcome Mr Ulf Adelson, Leader of the Moderate (Conservative) Party in Sweden. Mr Adelson is visiting the UK as a guest of HMG. His visit began yesterday and ends tomorrow.

IN THE HOUSE

There are no STATEMENTS today.

ANSWERS OF INTEREST

No 129 Written 3.30 pm: Mr John Heddle to ask S/S Transport if he will make a statement on the future of transport supplementary grant. (Answer will simply set out the mechanics for future payment of this grant which helps local authorities with their transport costs.)

No 139 Written 3.30 pm: Mr Tony Durant to ask S/S Environment what changes he intends to make to the urban programme in the light of the Budget announcement that up to £70m of the provision for the urban programme and for derelict land reclamation in 1983 will be earmarked for projects that encourage participation by the private sector. (Answer will indicate that if Local Authorities go into partnership with the private sector on inner city development projects in 43 designated locations then the Government will give the local authorities 75% of their investment.)

No 138 Written: Mr Geoffrey Johnson Smith to ask the Home Secretary if he can announce the remaining names to serve on the Independent Inquiry into the Broadcasting Policy Aspects of the Expansion of Cable. (Answer will announce names - Sir Maurice Hodgson and Professor Ring.) 3.30 pm.

PUBLICATIONS

The Report of the Working Party on Postgraduate Education is published today at 2.30 pm.

The Report of the Police Complaints Board 1981 is to be published today at 3.30 pm (CFRs yesterday). Press Conference in Waterloo Bridge House at 3.30 pm.

BILL

The Merchant Shipping (Liner Conferences) Bill, which is technical

and deals with cargo rates in shipping, is published today. A Press Notice will be in the Lobby at 12 noon.

MR HEATH

Asked if Mr Heath had communicated with No 10 we said we were not aware of any such communication. We did not understand these stories. Our understanding was that a member of Mr Heath's staff asked the Embassy in Peking if they would pass a message to his office.

MINISTERIAL APPOINTMENTS

We said we could not be sure that the consequential Ministerial appointments would all be completed today but it was possible that further announcements would be made later in the day, possibly during the early evening. It was not necessarily true to say that there would be a second Foreign Office Minister in the Cabinet.

Asked about suggestions of a delay on the part of Mr Pym in accepting his new office, we said we were not aware of any such delay and rejected suggestions that Mr Pym had hesitated because he had misled the House in his inability to confirm the Falkland Islands' invasion last week. We repeated again that confirmation had simply not been received at the time Mr Pym was speaking.

ADVANCE WARNING

Asked again about intelligence giving advance warning of a likely invasion of the Falklands, we rejected reports that sources in Argentina had not been listened to. Referring to Lord Carrington's interview of the previous day, we emphasised that Argentina had been blowing hot and cold over the Falklands for many years. It was clear that the Argentines had not made up their minds to invade until the 29 March. We pointed out that even if firm information had been available at the time suggested it would not have been possible to get military forces there in time. We urged the Lobby to remember in present circumstances that careless talk costs lives and expressed concern about the amount of dis-information that seemed to be flying about.

To suggestions that an inquiry should be set up in Whitehall on the quality of advice received, we said all efforts were concentrated on the main issue in hand.

OTHER GOVERNMENTS

Questioned about the New Zealand offer of help, we said the Government was grateful for Mr Muldoon's strong support. On the question of his offer of direct naval assistance, we said we would have to wait and see. Mr Muldoon had said he would consider a request for help if approached. We pointed out that we had a large fleet at sea.

We noted that other countries had condemned the action of Argentina. The Prime Minister had communicated with a number of leaders and had talked to President Mitterand on the telephone.

On President Reagan's session with journalists yesterday, we said it was clear that the President wanted to concentrate on securing a diplomatic solution to the problem.

DEBATE

Asked if the Foreign Secretary and the Defence Secretary would open and close the debate, we said this was a possibility. We knew of no plans for the Prime Minister to speak.

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WORLD CUP

It was suggested that the FA was seeking a meeting with the Government on the question of Argentina's participation in the World Cup. We said no approaches had been received at No 10 or at the office of the Minister of Sport. We pointed out that the World Cup organisers were an independent body.

THE QUEEN

Asked about a possible broadcast by The Queen to the Falklands, we supposed this was for consideration but certainly no decision had been made. Lord Carrington had of course done a broadcast already. We confirmed that The Queen was due to go to Canada during the week after next.

OTHER POINTS

We confirmed that the Prime Minister's next overseas visit would be to the Economic Summit in Versailles.

On the question of negotiations with Argentina, we thought that country's action had set things back. The UK Government's resolve on the Falklands would now be greater in any future negotiations.

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