

INTERVIEW WITH THE SECRETARY OF STATE, MR FRANCIS PYM,
BY MICHAEL BRUNSON, ITN, 7 APRIL 1982

Falkland Islands

Interviewer: Foreign Secretary, Mr Haig is coming to London, the Argentinians are apparently talking about negotiations, suggesting negotiations. Is Britain about to do a deal over the Falklands?

Mr Pym: There seems no sign of that at all. The condition for us is a withdrawal of the Argentine troops who ought not to be there. I'm glad Secretary of State Haig is coming and then going on to the Argentine. It may be that he can contribute something important to the search for a peaceful solution, which is what we want, but there is nothing else happening at the moment beyond that and we hope very much that the Argentinians will withdraw.

Interviewer: Both you and the Prime Minister have used the words 'returning the Islands to British administration' and it's been noticed that you haven't been using the words 'return them to British sovereignty'. Is then British ownership, as it were, of the Falklands negotiable?

Mr Pym: No, it isn't. You see we already have sovereignty. It's a legal concept, it's a legal matter and we already have it. And the restoration of British administration is as it were to use and take advantage of sovereignty that already exists now.

Interviewer: So to be quite clear, we are not talking about giving away the Falklands?

Mr Pym: No indeed not.

Interviewer: But if the Islanders were to change their minds and to decide that it wouldn't be worth going through a war, if the Islanders themselves reached that decision, would we then think about giving the Islands away?

Mr Pym: We've always taken the view that the wishes of the

/Islanders

Islanders are of paramount importance and indeed it is their own right to decide their own future, their own way of life that's been taken away from them for the time being. And that's what we have to restore. And in recent negotiations with the Argentine Government and with British Ministers a member of the Falkland Islands Council has been present. They've always been kept in the picture of all discussions that are going on and we've always taken the view that it is for them to decide what they want. So if they took some drastic change of mind, well, that would be another matter. But there's no sign of that because they're really British. They're very proud of being British and all the indications are that they firmly wish to remain so.

Interviewer: So the only way in which we would discuss British sovereignty with the Argentinians would be if the Islanders themselves clearly felt that that was something that could be discussed?

Mr Pym: Yes, that's right. And anyhow there can be no talking while those forces are there, which they have no right to be.

Interviewer: I was going to ask you that as well. It's a precondition, is it, that Argentinian forces must leave before anything can be discussed?

Mr Pym: The United Nations have passed a resolution to that effect. And it's of great interest to all the free world who have supported us, Europe, the Commonwealth, other countries all round the world. Because once you allow a strong government to invade illegally, a weak and small country, then there will be a series of invasions all round the world which really would make life quite intolerable. No. We stand by the charter and we're looking for a peaceful solution and we need the support of the world community whose interest in a right and proper solution is just as important to them as it is to us.

Interviewer: The Shadow Foreign Secretary in the House this

/afternoon

afternoon raised the point that, yes a peaceful solution, but we don't want the peace of the graveyard, as he put it, if the British taskforce hits the beaches. Can you give an assurance that minimum force will be used?

Mr Pym: We aren't in the area of using force at all at the moment and we hope we won't have to. But of course at the end of the day if nothing happens it might come to that. But all our efforts are to achieve it peacefully and the despatch of the fleet and the forces that are now going towards the South Atlantic are of course a back-up, and a very powerful back-up indeed, to the efforts we are making. I would hope myself by the time they get there that economic pressures and diplomatic pressures and all the rest of it would have an effect on the Argentines. But if not, at the end of the day, of course one must be prepared to use that force because if you allow a country, a small country invaded by a big country, a bullying neighbour, a most disreputable regime, to continue, then you are risking anarchy all round the world. And every country has an interest in that. You must be prepared to use it at the end of the day, but our entire effort and energy and mine in particular, but the whole Government, is dedicated to try and find a peaceful solution if we can.

Interviewer: What is your reaction to Mr Callaghan's apparent charge that the Government is in no fit state to run this operation and that either a War Cabinet or a War Minister should be appointed?

Mr Pym: I think that is totally untrue, totally untrue. There is a group of Ministers meeting constantly over this situation, which is as it should be, and I don't accept that charge.

Interviewer: Thank you very much indeed.

INTERVIEW WITH THE SECRETARY OF STATE, MR FRANCIS PYM,
BY GORDON MARTIN, BBC EXTERNAL SERVICES, 7 APRIL 1982

Falkland Islands

Interviewer: Mr Pym, taking over the Foreign and Commonwealth Office is obviously a daunting task at the best of times. Do you think it's especially difficult now that you are doing so in the midst of this crisis?

Mr Pym: Yes, of course I do because the situation is serious. One country, Argentina, has invaded the Falkland Islands ~~and taken it over~~ and treated the people there as a conquered population; they have no right to be there. The day after the United Nations passed a resolution at Britain's request requiring ^{Argentine withdrawal} ~~certain things to be conformed with. We've done that and all other countries have done that and agreed to do that,~~ But so far the Argentine has taken no notice whatsoever. So the position is very very serious. We have sailing towards the South Atlantic the Navy, the fleet, but we are working with all our might and main to get a peaceful solution. Everybody wants there to be peaceful solution. But of course there cannot be any talks or any negotiations or anything of that sort until there is a withdrawal of the Argentine troops. And then of course thereafter, when that has been achieved, we will go on discussing with the Falkland Islanders a kind of future that they want. They have been recently at all negotiations with our Ministers in New York and other places, being a party to and listening to discussions taking place. What we want to do is restore their rights to have the kind of government and the kind of life that they want.

Interviewer: So you reaffirm, Mr Pym, that any talks are absolutely dependent on the prior and unconditional withdrawal of Argentine troops?

Mr Pym: Well, of course, because they have got no legality for being there. The United Nations resolution has been passed and of course they ought to withdraw and that is the situation. And if we don't insist on that happening, and not only just us but the whole free world and all the members of the United Nations, if that is not insisted upon, then other countries will

be invaded and we will get a sort of anarchic state. So it's very very important and in the interests of the whole world that order is restored to the Falkland Islands.

Interviewer: So when the Argentine Foreign Minister offers to talk and says he's confident there can be an honourable settlement, he must bear this in mind. It must be first the withdrawal of Argentine troops?

Mr Pym: Most certainly. And he knows our position. Not only are we prepared and willing to negotiate, we are desirous of negotiating a settlement. And this was said and there was an exchange of views at a meeting in New York not so long ago. Oh no. If they want a negotiated settlement and some new arrangements the first thing that has to happen is that the Argentine forces are withdrawn.

Interviewer: President Reagan has just announced that Mr Haig, the Secretary of State, is coming to London and going to Buenos Aires. What do you think he can do, Mr Pym?

Mr Pym: Well, it can only be helpful, can't it? I welcome him and I look forward to meeting him again. It was obvious that he and the President of the United States thought that advantage could be gained, that it would be useful for their Secretary of State to come here and go on to Buenos Aires and we shall certainly put to him our views and discuss the whole situation with him and it may well be that he will have a contribution to make. We just don't know. But I will certainly welcome him and naturally a peaceful settlement is what we want and he may well be able to contribute to that. I hope so and we will do everything we can to help.

Interviewer: Britain has so far had the backing of the United Nations resolution and there have been expressions and indeed actions of solidarity from our European partners and from the Commonwealth. What more would you like to see, Mr Pym from

/those

those quarters?

Mr Pym: I think more economic ~~sanctions~~^{measures} and action. ~~Action perhaps rather than sanctions is appropriate.~~ A number of countries have undertaken already to stop supplying credit, ~~to,~~ perhaps contemplating stopping Argentine imports, a whole range of measures that they are considering. I hope there will be more of those measures and more countries deciding to take action of that kind because the Argentine economy is vulnerable. They have got a very high rate of inflation, they are vulnerable and pressure of this kind I'm sure will be helpful.

Interviewer: Finally, Mr Pym, as you know BBC broadcasts have been increased to the Falklands from 1 to 3 a week this week. Have you any message, Mr Pym, ~~from~~^{for} those beleaguered people?

Mr Pym: I'm very sad indeed to know their present situation. We shall do everything we can to restore the position as soon as we can. By that I mean of course to bring about by peaceful means if we can the withdrawal of the Argentine forces who had absolutely no right to be there. We hope the United Nations will be true to its charter, which we fully support and insist that that is done and we will do everything we can to achieve that ultimate objective. And in the meantime, I can assure the people of the Falkland Islands that not only in Britain but in many other countries all over the world we are constantly thinking of you and we will do our best to come to your aid just as soon as we can and we hope by peaceful means.

Interviewer: Secretary of State, thank you.

Vol. 429

No. 71



Wednesday

7 April 1982

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(HANSARD)

HOUSE OF LORDS

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word in this Bill on behalf of the Government, although I too am anxious to proceed to the next business. I want to pay a tribute, first of all, to my noble friend Lord Glenarthur for his competence in mastering the technical intricacies of the legislation and to pay tribute to the mixture of firmness and charm which he has displayed as he piloted the Bill through the House. I have been full of admiration for that. Unlike my noble friend Lord Massereene and Ferrard, I think that this is a most useful and worthwhile Bill. It has the fullest support of the Government. It was the subject of most extensive consultation and thought before the proposals were put into legislative form. It is an anti-poaching, anti-cruelty Bill—and I want to emphasise the last phrase. Most of its provisions seek to limit or to control the shooting of deer whether by day or by night, in or out of the close season, and, above all, to curb the trade in poaching which is abhorrent to us all.

It was a great disappointment to read in the *Sunday Times* that the Bill is condemned by the RSPCA and the British Deer Society and others because, it is alleged, it extends the right to shoot at night. It is worthwhile saying for the record that the Bill does nothing of the sort. It very considerably narrows the existing right to shoot at night. Occupiers in person will be able to shoot only sika and red deer at night, and even then they must be prepared if necessary, to show that their action was necessary to prevent serious damage. The right to shoot at night may be delegated but only under strictest conditions and with the specific authorisation of the Red Deer Commission according to a code of conduct which will be drawn up by the commission.

If this Bill (if I may use the word) dies—and I said at Second Reading that Private Members' Bills of this kind are tender plants; and that is so—we shall go straight back to the 1959 position where the occupier of land in Scotland will be able to shoot marauding deer at any hour of the day or night for 12 months of the year. I counsel anybody who bothers to read the provisions of this Bill to compare what is in the Bill with what is in the 1959 Act. I am saddened that any organisation should wish, let alone to threaten, to kill the Bill in another place; but that is the prerogative of those who are there. But I think that such a course would be welcome to the poaching fraternity and to those few farmers and crofters who exploit the presence of deer on their ground. I trust that those concerned with the welfare of animals will study the Bill and, like your Lordships' House, come to the conclusion that it deserves unqualified support.

On Question. Bill passed and sent to the Commons.

The Falkland Islands

1.32 p.m.

Lord Belstead: My Lords, with the leave of the House, I will now answer the Private Notice Question asked by the noble Lord, Lord Peart.

"Her Majesty's Government are energetically pursuing their efforts to return the Falkland Islands to British administration as soon as possible. We

are bringing a combination of diplomatic, economic and military pressures to bear.

"Our naval task force gives us the strength from which to urge a settlement.

"We have broken off diplomatic relations with Argentina, frozen Argentine assets, stopped ECGD credits, banned exports of arms and stopped all imports from Argentina from midnight on 6th April.

"Following the United Nations Security Council's mandatory resolution condemning the invasion, we have informed a large number of friendly countries of the measures we are taking and have urged them to take parallel action to bring pressure on Argentina.

"Argentina must be in no doubt about our determination to put an end to the occupation of the Falkland Islands".

Lord Peart: My Lords, may I first congratulate the noble Lord, Lord Belstead, on his promotion. We all recognise fully his sterling qualities and wish him good luck.

I want to put some questions, sharp questions I hope, to the Government. First, is there any chance of armed conflict taking place before the House resumes after the Easter Recess? In the event of armed conflict, will the Minister give an assurance that the House will be recalled? Is the noble Lord aware that the House, in time, will demand a full account of the advance intelligence received by Her Majesty's Government of the Argentine invasion, when this was received, by whom, and what counter-preparations were made, if any, as a consequence? Can the noble Lord assure the House that Her Majesty's Government will countenance no solution of the problem which is not based on the islanders' wish to live under the sovereignty of their choice? Is the noble Lord also aware that Her Majesty's Government's failure to defend the Falkland Islands may have repercussions in other places where the United Kingdom has responsibility? Can the noble Lord assure the House that preparations have been made against a possible attack on Belize?

Lord Belstead: My Lords, for the very kind words to me personally of the noble Lord, Lord Peart, I am grateful. The noble Lord asked me certain questions. The first was whether there would be a chance of armed conflict before the House meets again after the Easter Recess and, in that case, an assurance that the House will be recalled. I think it is well known on all sides of the House what will be the steaming time of the task force to the Falkland Islands waters. I think calculations can be done by your Lordships as to the likelihood of the possibility of a confrontation before the House meets again. So far as an assurance being given to the House that, in the event of a confrontation occurring, the House will be recalled, I think that this is a matter which ought to be pursued through the usual channels.

The noble Lord asked a direct question about the intelligence which we received. The evidence available to us showed that the Argentine régime took the decision to invade no earlier than 28th March and possibly as late as 31st March. The evidence before that time was not clear; it was to some extent contradictory and, in our assessment, pointed the other way. It is true

[LORD BELSTEAD.]
that in the event we were mistaken but so, I am advised,
were other countries.

The noble Lord asked me to state that there shall be, in essence, no solution of the problem if the Falkland Islands shall not be free. I hope that the noble Lord will be satisfied with the answer which I have given to that supplementary question in my original Answer:

"We are bringing a combination of diplomatic, economic and military pressures to bear".

And, of course, we are working in the general context of the Security Council resolution calling for the immediate cessation of hostilities, the immediate withdrawal of Argentine forces and a diplomatic settlement. That is a mandatory resolution under the United Nations Charter.

Lord Peart: My Lords, Belize?

Lord Belstead: My Lords, I am afraid that the noble Lord has bowled me out on the question of Belize. If it is not unacceptable, I think that this is a matter on which I shall have to communicate with the noble Lord afterwards.

Lord Gladwyn: My Lords, we, too, congratulate the noble Lord most warmly on his appointment. I do not think that this is the occasion for me to say anything other than we all hope that the measures now taken by the Government will be successful.

Lord Kennet: My Lords, the Social Democratic Party Peers would like to join those who have already congratulated the noble Lord, Lord Belstead, on his new appointment and we wish him well in that office. May I ask whether the Government are aware that, leaving aside the question of failures of intelligence appreciation before the invasion, we on this Bench fully support the action which has now been taken by the Government? We agree that the aim must be to regain for the Falklanders the right of self-determination which they have always enjoyed until this invasion. Do the Government agree that the way to achieve this is to seek that combination of external forces acting upon the Argentine authorities which will induce them to withdraw their troops with the smallest amount of renewed bloodshed—and, if possible, with none? Do the Government think that a contingent of United Nations' observers to supervise that withdrawal, during which the British task force could stand off, would be a useful arrangement?

1.41 p.m.

Lord Belstead: My Lords, I am grateful to the noble Lords, Lord Gladwyn and Lord Kennet, for their kind remarks and for the support in essence of the Answer which I have given to the noble Lord, Lord Peart. The noble Lord, Lord Kennet, asked me two questions. The first, in effect, was about the result of external pressure upon the situation in the Falkland Islands with, as the noble Lord put it, the ultimate objective of attaining our objective of recovery without the loss of blood in action.

It is worth me saying this. This Government are taking action along three main lines: first, we have

despatched the strong naval task force; secondly, we are following maximum diplomatic efforts; thirdly, we are also taking economic measures. We are urging other countries to do likewise. The first reactions to this are hopeful; and by that I mean that it is now quite clear that some countries are determined to see that arms sales to Argentina will not take place. Your Lordships may be interested to know that my right honourable friend the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary will, in his speech this afternoon, be announcing that the Argentine consulates in Liverpool and Hong Kong will now be closed.

Lord Boyd-Carpenter: My Lords, may I add my congratulations to my noble friend and condolences that his maiden trip should be in such stormy waters. But may I ask him two questions? One arises out of the answer that he has just given. Can he indicate some of the Commonwealth countries—I think New Zealand and Singapore are included—which have already indicated full support for Her Majesty's Government in this controversy? Can he also, in addition to the question about Belize and precautions there asked by the noble Lord, Lord Peart, indicate that a watchful eye is being kept on Gibraltar?

Lord Belstead: My Lords, my answer to my noble friend's second question is, yes. A very vigilant eye will certainly be kept so far as that is concerned upon Gibraltar. May I thank my noble friend for his characteristically kind remarks to me, which I very much value. I am sorry but I cannot add to the list of Commonwealth countries which the noble Lord, Lord Boyd-Carpenter, has already given to the House in his supplementary question as supporting us in this matter; but I should like to make it quite clear that the Security Council mandatory resolution, which of course received more than the necessary number of votes in order to make it mandatory, shows the very wide condemnation of the action taken by Argentina.

Lord Shinwell: May I join in the congratulations to the Minister on his appointment and wish him every success. Within the terms of the Security Council one can only accept the Statement made by the Minister on behalf of the Government. We have to operate within the provisions laid down by the Security Council. In other words, we have to pursue a course of conduct of a diplomatic character; but at the same time we have to keep in reserve—and I emphasise the reservation—that if the diplomatic course fails, we have no other alternative than to take forceful action, much as we would regret it.

What I want to be assured about is this: there is a great deal of talk going on about American mediation. I recognise the need for American co-operation, but I doubt whether at this stage we require anything in the nature of external mediation. This must be left to the decision of the Security Council, and anything that follows that must be within those terms. Should we fail in the diplomatic sphere—and I read the newspapers very closely and I listen to what people say outside this House; I have taken care of that, and therefore I venture to indulge in that could be

regarded as a warning—if we are faced with what may be regarded as war, there would be bloodshed and a great deal of violence. We must be assured that the people of our country are united behind the Government, irrespective of political opinion.

We are concerned about our security. We are also concerned about the fate of the people in the Falkland Islands; but we are also concerned about repercussions that would evolve if something goes wrong. Therefore, I call upon our people to stand by the Government, whatever happens. I should have liked to hear—perhaps he said it but I did not catch it—from my noble friend the Leader of the Labour Opposition, and from Lord Gladwyn, speaking for the Liberal Party, and from Lord Kennet, speaking for the SDP, that if we are faced with violence and trouble, they will support the Government, and no nonsense about it. I make that quite clear. This is irrespective of political opinions. We are behind the Government, the people of the Falkland Islands and the Security Council.

Lord Belstead: My Lords, the expression of view which the noble Lord has given to the House is widely welcomed on all sides. He mentioned the United States. I would only say in rejoinder to the noble Lord that of course we are in close touch with the United States. We are, after all, very close allies.

Lord Morris: My Lords—

Viscount St. Davids: My Lords—

Lord Morris: My Lords, I welcome my noble friend's Answer to the Private Notice Question by Her Majesty's loyal Opposition. It is clear to those who have followed this question closely, not only these days but over many years, that my noble friend's Statement, and indeed those of the right honourable lady, the Prime Minister and my noble friend Lord Carrington, are no less deserving of the admiration and gratitude of not only this country but the whole free world. We are not speaking only—

Several noble Lords: Question!

Lord Morris: My Lords, in asking my question it must, I suggest, be realised that we speak not only of the Falkland Islanders and the scattered, windswept islands 8,000 miles away, but we are speaking of the strategic importance of the whole of Antarctica. This must be understood. I ask Her Majesty's Government that at no stage they lessen their resolve, however subtle or persuasive the ministrations of the appeasers and the unwitting allies of the fascists. I am confident that the right honourable lady the Prime Minister will never lessen her resolve. I hope that my noble friend can assure me on that point.

Lord Belstead: My Lords, the assurance that I should like to give to my noble friend is that our immediate objective, to which we must devote all our efforts, is to obtain the removal of Argentine forces from the Falkland Islands.

Viscount St. Davids: My Lords, may I, as a Cross-Bencher, give my personal congratulations to the noble

Lord on his elevation, as I have always very much admired him? Does he not think it very unfair that certain sources have put it about that we ought to have had forces permanently in the Falkland Islands or somewhere nearby to preserve the then situation? The old policy of sending a gunboat was not a policy of keeping a gunboat on the site, which would have been ridiculous, but of sending a gunboat when something had gone wrong. Surely there is an important lesson to be learned from this. Would not the noble Lord agree that this is the position of the previous policy—the point was that the world knew that a gunboat would be sent? Would he not agree that this is a valuable lesson and is it not important that the world should know that the gunboat would arrive? Secondly, would he not agree that when the gunboat did arrive it did not necessarily open fire: it added its potential power to the forces of reason which were then used?

Lord Belstead: My Lords, I am grateful to the noble Viscount for his kind words to me. He outlines very accurately the strategic and logistical difficulties of the position of the Falkland Islands in the South Atlantic Ocean. But these problems we have experienced in the past can be overcome if we can put into effect the mandatory resolution of the Security Council.

Lord Molloy: My Lords, while wishing the noble Lord the Minister all success and contentment in his new and exacting post and hoping that the tensions which exist today will not be so bad in a month's time, may I ask him whether he will give the House an assurance that the policies to be followed by the Government, involving as they well may discussions with the President of the United States, and the Security Council and various other bodies in the weeks to come, will be based fundamentally on the desire of the Falkland Islanders to retain their homeland and that this must be the paramount theme, the quintessential theme, running through everything on this issue that the Government embark upon? Such policies must therefore be designated to liberate the Falkland Islanders from a tyranny under which they now suffer and which might become very much worse. Such expressions will enhance their morale and they will know that it is the desire not only of this Government but indeed of the British people, as a fundamental endeavour, to restore the right to live on their islands in freedom, peace and prosperity.

Lord Belstead: My Lords, I am grateful to the noble Lord, Lord Molloy, for his kind words to me. It is because Her Majesty's Government attach the first priority to the freedom of the people of the Falkland Islands to live for as long as they so wish in their own islands that we attach the greatest importance to the Security Council resolution which, it is worth repeating, calls for the immediate cessation of hostilities, for immediate Argentine withdrawal and a diplomatic settlement.

Lord Chelwood: My Lords, it goes without saying that all of us on the Government Back-Benches warmly congratulate the noble Lord, Lord Belstead, on his new appointment. He can take that for granted of course. May I put one question to him? Successive

[LORD CHELWOOD.]

Governments have attached paramount importance to the views of the Falkland Islanders themselves in all their negotiations with the Argentine Government. May I ask my noble friend whether in future negotiations which may affect their status, and in particular were it to be necessary to contemplate an attack on Port Stanley, Her Majesty's Government would use their very best endeavours to consult the best representative opinion they can from the islands and to take full account of it?

Lord Belstead: My Lords, I am, I think, right in saying that the diplomatic discussions which took place up till the time Argentina breached those discussions by the unilateral use of force, on most occasions had been attended by representatives of the Falkland Islands. I therefore find very little difficulty in giving that assurance. May I also thank my noble friend for his characteristically generous remarks.

Viscount Hanworth: My Lords, bearing in mind the seriousness of the situation, will the Government consider setting up, if they have not already done so, some means of inter-party consultation so that, so far as possible, the nation can speak with one voice, independent of party?

Lord Belstead: My Lords, I take the point which the noble Viscount makes. I think that perhaps we ought to see today what the expressions of view are in both Houses of Parliament. We have had a good opportunity in your Lordships' House to get views from all Benches. That is of great value and will be taken into very serious account by Her Majesty's Government.

Lord Lovat: My Lords, may I ask whether Her Majesty's Government are in close touch with Chile? I ask this advisedly because of the stormy nature of the waters south of Tierra del Fuego where there are good anchorages on the mainland of Chile.

Lord Belstead: My Lords, your Lordships will understand that at this stage I would prefer not to comment on operational matters. But may I quickly say to my noble friend that this should not be taken to imply either a confirmation or a denial of any reports of the possibility of help from other countries or of the importance of the other matters my noble friend has drawn to my attention.

Lord Brockway: My Lords, while complimenting the Minister on his appointment, may I ask him this question? He has referred to the United Nations Security Council resolution which, while rightly condemning the invasion of the Falklands, in its first sentence asks for the cessation of hostilities and in its last sentence asks for negotiations for a peaceful settlement. May I ask the Minister whether the Government during these three crucial weeks will make a priority of seeking with the United Nations, with President Reagan, with the Commonwealth Secretariat and with all other elements, a solution to this problem to prevent a war situation arising at the end of that time?

Lord Belstead: My Lords, I am grateful to the noble Lord, Lord Brockway, for his remarks and I would answer that we welcome serious moves for negotiations for a peaceful settlement; but I have to add to that that our immediate objective, to which we must devote all our efforts, is to obtain the removal of Argentine forces from the Falkland Islands.

Lord Renton: My Lords, will my noble friend give your Lordships an assurance that the desire for peace will not be regarded as a reason for appeasement? Secondly, may I ask my noble friend whether there is any further news of the small number of British civilians on South Georgia, including two women scientists?

Lord Belstead: My Lords, I will readily give my noble friend Lord Renton the assurance for which he asked first—that the desire for peace should not be used as being a desire for appeasement. My noble friend also asked about the position of those who are on South Georgia. In addition to the 13 at Grytviken, there are 15 other personnel, including two ladies, at various sites. We have asked the Swiss Embassy in Buenos Aires, in conjunction with the International Committee of the Red Cross, to inform the Argentines of the need to ensure their safety on humanitarian grounds. We are awaiting a response.

Poland and the Helsinki Declaration

1.59 p.m.

Lord Gladwyn rose to ask Her Majesty's Government what practical steps they are proposing to take in order to persuade the Polish Government to honour its obligations under the Helsinki Declaration and restore to the Polish people their human rights.

The noble Lord said: My Lords, the Question I am putting to the Government this afternoon deals specifically, as you will have seen, with the additional measures, if any, which we—and by "we" I mean the whole Western Alliance—should now take in order to induce the Polish Government in some way to make amends for the blow to East-West good relations, or *détente* as the vogue word has it, resulting from their brutal repression of Solidarity and their imposition of martial law.

Of course, my Lords, that also inevitably raises indirectly the whole question of East-West relations in a world still unfortunately overshadowed by the nuclear arms race and the spectre of a possible world war three. For this reason I believe it would have been preferable if we had been able to have a full-dress debate on this question, but, since it is not possible, the noble Lord, Lord Weidenfeld, has very kindly withdrawn his motion and instead is taking part in discussion on my own Unstarred Question.

I must say also that, though recent events have obviously lessened immediate interest in this discussion, they have not diminished its potential importance. The last time a considerable British force was deployed in anger in order to achieve a political objective was, to the best of my belief, in 1956, and we all know how that ended. This time, it is true that our force has not been fitted out in secret and, above all, it has not been despatched in defiance of the views of the United States

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