

MOD PRESS BRIEFING HELD ON 17.4.82 1200 IN HISTORIC ROOM 27

- Q. Is it the P & O Crew?
- A. If you phone the Press Office they will give you details.
- Q. Why is the Pict being requisitioned?
- A. It is to provide back-up to other ^{vessels} fishing facilities, which were described as very suitable for the kinds of conditions it would be expected to meet in terms of climate - sturdy ships.
- Q. Where is the Pict normally based?
- A. Don't know - the Press Office will give details. Do know it belongs to British United Trawlers and is at sea off Norway.
- Q. What sort of ferry is the Norland?
- A. The Press Office or the Company will give details.
- Q. Why did you say no major Argentine vessel?
- A. When I said previously that there were no Argentinian vessels I was stating a fact. No major vessels does not mean to say that minor vessels have breached.
- Q. Have you seen any reports that an air exclusion zone was declared on the Falkland Islands.
- A. No air exclusion zone was declared. (Article 51 United Nations Charter quoted).
- Q. Is an air exclusion zone being declared by the Department of Trade?
- A. No exclusion zone has been announced by the United Kingdom Government. We expect various nations to make their own decisions, taking into account the situation around the Falkland Islands.
- Q. Is it the first time you have made that specific reference?
- A. It is the first time I have made that specific statement but it follows on from the statement made by Francis Pym.
- Q. Due to geographical position - very little air traffic which is unrelated to the Islands?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Have you taken any additional measures?
- A. No additional zone has been announced.
- Q. Has the MEZ situation changed from Monday?
- A. No.

- Q. A notice of shipping was published on Monday. Are you publishing any further measures to airlines?
- A. The MOD has not published any further information to airlines and I have no knowledge that they will.
- Q. If such a prohibited air space zone were declared, would it be MOD to make the announcement?
- A. I am not going to prejudge that. No comment.
- Q. Can you tell us about the suggestion that the US are going to hand over satellite pictures to the Argentinians?
- A. I cannot be expected to comment on that.
- Q. Is the MOD planning to requisition and charter any more ships than the 26 already requisitioned?
- A. I can only say we are keeping the situation under review.
- Q. Are the ships basically back-up ships, maintaining the 8000 miles communication?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Have we any sailing ^{time for} ~~pass~~ Uganda ^{from} to Gibraltar?
- A. No.
- Q. Have you any additional numbers or names of the ships that have already sailed?
- A. No. The task force remains as described by John ~~Mott~~.
- Q. Did John ~~Mott~~ give all the figures?
- A. I cannot be drawn into giving any further names, which does not mean to say there were not any further names of vessels.
- Q. If ships were suddenly put to sea are you saying you would not necessarily tell us?
- A. If there were an operational reason why I should not then I wouldn't.
- Q. Would it be right to assume there is a second group?
- A. If we are thinking in terms of reinforcement - yes.
- Q. Would they be support ships?
- A. I see no reason to make a distinction.
- Q. Is the industrial problem causing any problems for the Atlantic Conveyor?
- A. It's something we're living with.
- Q. Is the Atlantic Conveyor chartered or requisitioned?
- A. It is chartered.

- Q. What are the implications as far as the industrial problems are concerned?
- A. The facilities at Devonport allow work to be done more quickly. My understanding is that it will go to Devonport.
- Q. What are the Brazilians up to?
- A. Ask the FCO.
- Q. Is their Navy still exercising?
- A. The exercise was a long standing one.
- Q. How long is it due to last?
- A. Don't know. It is long standing and the people are aware of it.
- Q. Has any territory been offered with facilities?
- A. Ask the FCO.
- Q. ~~Is~~ ^{What is} the ~~bad~~ weather affecting operations? in the Falkland area.
- A. ~~Yes~~ - As expected, bad and variable to worse!
- Q. ~~Does~~ ^{the aircraft at Port Stanley} have any bad weather gear?
- A. Very little. ^{It is a} very primitive aircraft.
- Q. How long have the two men spent being debriefed here?
- A. I cannot tell you. They were being debriefed when we talked yesterday and I don't know if its finished yet.
- Q. Can you tell us any more about the snaps?
- A. No - I went as far as possible yesterday.
- Q. ~~Are the~~ ^{Can you comment on the French Admiral's opinion of the Argentine Navy.} Argentine ships poor?
- A. In our view we are tackling the task with professionalism, caution, realism and determination. ~~We are not under-estimating the~~ ^{Argentinians.}

Please note the following addition:

"Exercises will take place off the North of Scotland by Vulcans. They will start shortly, but not today Sunday 18 April".

"MISSING" MARINES

31A

There may be some pressure on the subject of any Marines still operating in the Falklands.

Line: All Royal Marines are accounted for. 28 Marines and 1 seaman who were missing are now in Montevideo.

If Pressed on any operating in islands, still: There are no Marines on the Falkland Islands.

STATEMENT BY MOD SPOKESMAN 18.4.82 1200

"I am not able to go into detail about the Task Force except to say that it is on route and on time. I am able to say, in relation to the Argentinian fleet, that all the evidence we have suggests that most of the Argentinian fleet is at sea, including the carrier and the cruiser and that they are all off the coast of Argentina. Beyond that I am afraid I am not able to go. I am able, once more, to confirm to you that no major Argentinian vessel or auxiliary has breached the maritime exclusion zone and we have no report of any Argentinian vessel breaching the zone."

ALL DUTY PRESS OFFICERS TO NOTE AND TO OBSERVE EXTREME CAUTION IN DEALING WITH THE FOREGOING

In reply to any enquiry relating to the supply or delivery of ex RAF aircraft to Chile you should say:

"I have no information on this matter"

The Centre Policy Desk must be informed so that DS8 can be alerted to provide an immediate PR Line.