

LOBBY BRIEFING

time: 11 AM date: 20.4.82

PRIME MINISTER'S DAY

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

QUESTIONS

At 3.15 pm she will be in the House for Questions.

CABINET

A Cabinet meeting will be held at 5.15 pm at No 10.

RECEPTION FOR SUCCESS

At 6.30 pm the Prime Minister is due to host a Reception at No 10 for some of Britain's most successful industrial entrepreneurs. This is the third such reception at No 10 and the guests, both managers and employees, come from a wide range of industrial concerns.

PRESS NOTICE

Appointment of Sir Harold Atcherley as a Deputy Chairman of the Police Negotiating Board until the end of the year when he will succeed Lord Plowden as Chairman.

PRESIDENT OF CAMEROON

President Ahidjo of Cameroon arrives at Heathrow today at the start of his five-day visit. He will be met at the Airport by Mr Parkinson. He will come to No 10 for talks with the Prime Minister tomorrow.

IN THE HOUSE

There are no STATEMENTS today.

BILL PRESENTED TODAY

The Northern Ireland Bill, which makes provision for the resumption of legislative and executive functions by the Northern Ireland Assembly and by persons responsible to it. The Bill also amends the Northern Ireland Constitution Act 1973 and the Northern Ireland Assembly Act 1975. A short Bill of seven clauses.

ANSWERS OF INTEREST

No 16 Written 3.30 pm: Mr Anthony Nelson to ask S/S Industry whether he has received the joint studies by British and French officials of options for the future of Concorde and when he will discuss these with the French Minister of Transport. (Answer will say the report has been received and the two Ministers will meet soon - guidance is that this meeting will not be a "crunch" one on Concorde's future.)

No 17 Written 3.30 pm: Mr David Madel to ask S/S Industry when he will announce further appointments to the Board of British Shipbuilders. (Answer will announce a new appointment and two re-appointments.)

No 19 Written 3.30 pm: Mr Alan Clark to ask the Home Secretary when he expects to amend the Immigration Rules following the imposition of a visa requirement on Argentinians. (Answer will herald the laying of the Order in the House today, with copies in the Lobby. Argentinians have had to have visas since 12 noon on 9 April.)

MR PYM

We reported that Mr Pym had gone to Brussels for an introductory meeting with EC Foreign Ministers and no doubt he would thank them for their prompt response on sanctions over the Falkland Islands issue. He would also no doubt brief them on the situation but we would not expect him to go into detail on the latest proposals that have come out of Argentina. Mr Pym would be back in time for Cabinet this afternoon. He had a meeting in Brussels at noon followed by lunch.

FALKLAND ISLANDS

We recounted the events of the previous evening reporting that the Prime Minister had a meeting with the colleagues most closely concerned. Afterwards we had said proposals had been received and had pointed to the complexities and difficulties. We had also said that at first sight they did not meet the requirements strongly expressed by Parliament, particularly on the need to regard as paramount the wishes of the Islanders.

Asked about the status of the proposals, we emphasised that Mr Haig had brought out Argentinian proposals. Obviously we had been in touch with Washington but the proposals had come to us from Buenos Aires.

The Cabinet would have a careful look at the proposals. We could not go into any detail.

We would not necessarily expect Mr Haig to return to London but did not rule it out. We would also not necessarily expect a Statement to the House on Wednesday.

Asked about options open to the Government if it did not like the terms, we said that neither the Government nor Mr Haig were ruling out anything at this stage.

Asked about the relative importance of sovereignty and self-determination, we repeated the point that sovereignty was not in doubt. The priority was to implement Security Council resolution 502. The Government had always said that following the withdrawal of Argentinian forces there could then be talk about the long-term future. In this the wishes of the Islanders would be paramount.

Asked if Chiefs of Staff would attend the Cabinet meeting, we said this was not normal. Military Chiefs had been involved in meetings of the smaller group of Ministers.

We confirmed that the Prime Minister would probably see some Ministers before lunch.

Asked about the attendance of Mr Parkinson at the previous evening's meeting, we pointed out that he was a Cabinet Minister and had regularly attended meetings of the small group of Ministers concerned with the Falkland situation. Apart from anything else, obviously his contribution was of value in conveying opinion. Ministers most closely concerned were keeping in touch all the time.

We were not aware of any major announcements from MoD that day though we thought they would be issuing a new list of chartered and requisitioned merchant vessels. At the regular 12 noon briefing for defence correspondents, we thought it likely that the Royal Marines Lieutenant who had returned that morning with the group of Royal Marines