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PRESS DIGEST FOR SATURDAY 24 APRIL

Falkland Islands

Mr Pym reports today apparently empty-handed while the press believe and claim Washington confirms - that we are poised to attack South Georgia which would make a base of sorts. Times has Argentine claims to have seen warships 50 miles off Grytviken; all that is required is the word from Downing Street. Guardian says the Government is believed to have set Monday as the deadline for the use of force. Washington assumes an assault will come within a few days and then they will have to end their middle of the road posture.

Mr. Healey says UN intervention not likely to be helpful at present but would be bound to play a role if Haig's efforts fail.

No meeting for Mr. Pym with Reagan.

Military

Galtieri says we are half-way to war and is told that at least 1500 British and Argentine troops would be killed or wounded in a British invasion.

Two Argentine spy-planes intercepted.

Thousands of Britains still in Argentine advised to leave quickly by the FCO.

British Government will help Islanders who wish to leave.

Benn steps up his opposition to the use of force and suggests the cost will be anything from £500m to £1b.; Livingstone, GLC, attacks Foot's jingoistic posturing.

/Your



Your visit to the fleet headquarters and your praise for the Navy at Blesna reception.

In the Falklands: One of those who returns says quiet hostility of the Islanders is getting under the skin of the invaders.

In the USA Telegraph says Argentine is by no means sure of being able to secure the backing of other OAS countries for sanctions against Britain.

In the Argentine: Finance house crashes blamed on the economy - not on sanctions.

Galtieri says sovereignty is not negotiable; new Argentinian proposals do not indicate any real shift of ground.

In the EC: Silkin says the EC will force British housewives to pay for economic sanctions.

In the UK: Full page advertisement in the Times by Argentine citizens living in New York State give facts about Malvinas "you have probably never been told". Claims that by 1830 Falklands were indisputably part of the Argentines; the Islanders are second-class (British) citizens and that Britain have never shown an active interest in the Islanders.

Richard Luce backs an enquiry into the handling of the dispute before the invasion.

Geoffrey Smith, Times, says the unity of the Cabinet is impressive but there are three strands of opinion in the Party none of which is prepared to accept a humiliating settlement; thus, while the Government had made much political ground in three weeks, it is proceeding along a path

/offering



offering very strictly limited room for manoeuvre.

Express leader says we are on the brink of war. We know that if our forces are called upon to fight they will not fail. Their cause is just.

OTHER NEWS

Economy

Fall in inflation gets good coverage in the qualities with prospect of single figure inflation soon; Mail Leader, commenting on the economic improvement, says your straightforward determination makes you a good Prime Minister for foul weather.

US consumer price index falls for the first time in 17 years to an annual rate of 6.8%.

Spot oil prices continue to firm up.

Labour Party plans a crash programme of employment and training measures, including a 35 hour week.

Unions/Pay

NALGO NHS workers vote for industrial action in support of 12% - one day strikes and non-co-operation likely.

Civil Service arbitration award, variously described 5.9% or 6.5% gets mixed reception from unions: Kendal and Christopher say it is sensible and honourable but IPCS calls it deplorable.



AUEW rejects political strikes against the Government and launches a campaign to proscribe from the Labour Party militant tendency, Socialist Workers, Communists and Workers Revolutionary Parties; John Boyd says the Labour Party is a sewer for all sorts of rubbish.

BBC Nationwide programme blacked out by journalists pay dispute.

College lecturers offered 2.5% - local authorities claim some of them spend only 13 hours at lessons and others work less than three out of five days.

Guardian journalists accept 9% after some disruption.

Industry

British Caledonian to introduce services to five German cities.

Sheerness Steel which you praised during the steel strike wants a share of £40m nuclear shelter project apparently as a reward for avoiding the strike.

Education

Mail leader makes the point that every time one quango (the Schools Council in this case) is killed two others spring up.

Guardian leader says the Schools Council may have been chronically ineffectual but it is hardly fair to blame it for the muddled approach of our whole educational system.

Law and Order

Jamaican couple beaten up by London police awarded £51,000 damages; Sun leader says the police concerned should be sacked and the Express says they must be brought to justice; Mail says the case shows that police brutality against

/black



black people does occur and sometimes is apt to be covered up but the case also shows that when black people go to court they can get justice; the harm this kind of police behaviour does is incalculable.

Telegraph Gallop Poll says that a substantial majority, hardly changed since last year, want restoration of the death penalty; public concern about drug taking, rape and crimes of violence increases.

Politics

Peter Tatchell calls on MPs to take a £6,000 pay cut and to give up the perks of office to bring them closer to the experience of ordinary people.

Guardian says Beaconsfield by-election could be brought forward to 27 May if the climate is felt propitious.

Ireland

Provisional Sinn Fein, IRAs legal political front, will seek seats in the Northern Ireland Assembly.

Poland

Report from Sweden says the curfew will be lifted in the next few days and several hundred internees released.

Paris

Law and order becomes a headache for the French Government as terrorist activity increases; Government considers an action plan.