

LOBBY BRIEFING

time: 4.15 date: 26.4.82

Morning lobby was repeated.

Cabinet

Postponed from Tuesday to Wednesday am because Pym is going to Brussels tonight. Will report on Falkland Islands but prime topic is Mandate. Thursday's Cabinet would have other business; Wednesday was a FI discussion. This morning's meeting was stock-taking and review; so would Wednesday's Cabinet.

Urgency

We would not go beyond the PM's statement. UK hoped for a meeting soon between Haig and Costa Mendez. We could not rule out future military action before or during negotiations. We described PA's '48 hours' story as 'balderdash'. We would not talk about how much time was left. The weather would not allow us to hang about for ever.

Negotiations

We said we spoke to Argentina via the US. We had been in contact with the US today by telegram. It was not right to say that simple withdrawal was enough. On sovereignty we said our title to South Georgia was of a different order from that of the Falklands. UK had tried many times to involve the International Court of Justice - we listed the history of these attempts. Argentina did not accept the jurisdiction of the Court.

Airfield

We had not heard of any lengthening of the air-strip.

Debate

We expected a Debate to happen on Thursday as the Opposition had asked.

Pressure

Asked about further military pressure we said we hoped Argentina now recognised we meant business. One turn of the screw could be economic from the USA. We were not going to give Argentina advance notice. We had not asked the US for military assistance. We had had yesterday's action, there was economic pressure - it was all building up.

Du Cann

We did not know how long he had been in or the subject. We did not think it was Party business.

Cecil Parkinson

He was a member of the Cabinet giving advice and taking collective responsibility. He was there to give advice.

Haig

Asked why we relied so heavily on him we said he was still in play and must be allowed to operate. It was difficult to know who was speaking with authority in Argentina. We were not encouraging the idea of a Haig ultimatum to Argentina - he knew our views and would reflect them to the junta. We could not read the future or predict what would happen if Haig failed. We had backed his efforts and would continue to do so while they continued.

Cabinet

The inner group knew the views of the full Cabinet and made decisions in the light of that.

MoD Announcements

The lobby criticised the MoD's lack of information about events on S.Georgia and the timing of announcements. They were particularly critical of the way in which the attack on the submarine was announced in a manner designed to mislead.