

26/4

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRIME MINISTER TO COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF, FLEET

I have just reported to Parliament the successful completion of the operation to recapture the British dependency of South Georgia.

All the major political parties represented in Parliament join with me in congratulating the men in the Armed Forces under your command on the successful outcome of this operation. That this should have been achieved without injury to our own men and with so little to the opposing forces was quite remarkable.

I undertook in the House to convey to you and those who played their part in recapturing the island, the feelings of Parliament. This I gladly do. With this message come my own congratulations and that of Her Majesty's Government for a job well done in the best traditions of our Armed Forces.

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This has been approved by the Secretary of State for Defence.

Luncheon club for the Elderly
Drop-in-centre for the lonely and isolated
The Pakistani Welfare Association
Association of Spina Bifida and Hydrocephaly
Playgroups and mother and toddler groups
Community health council
Womens Royal Voluntary Service
Multiple Sclerosis Society

In addition other organisations including ethnic minority groups, the Hounslow trades council, the PHAB youth club and the family bereavement service have expressed interest in using rooms for their meetings.

Windscale

Mr. William Ross asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many curies of Plutonium-241 has been discharged into the sea from the Windscale plant; how much of this has to date decayed to Americium 241; and what is the projected rise in Americium 241 in the most affected area over the next 50 years.

Mr. Giles Shaw: About 540,000 curies of Plutonium-241 had been discharged from Windscale up to the end of 1981. Its decay has so far led to the formation of about 5,000 curies of Americium 241. By the year 2030 it is estimated that about 15,500 curies of Americium 241 will have been formed by the decay of Plutonium-241 discharged to the end of 1981. Plutonium and Americium remaining in the sea water will be rapidly dispersed, but some will remain in the area incorporated in the sediments.

Conservation

Mr. Farr asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when guidance notes on the implementation of section 48 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 for the Nature Conservancy Council, Countryside Commission, water authorities and internal drainage boards will be published.

Mr. Macfarlane: The guidance notes are being prepared as quickly as possible by officials of my Department, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and the Welsh Office, in consultation with other interested parties, to whom a draft has already been circulated for comments. It is hoped to issue the final version in the summer.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Vientiane

27. Sir Anthony Royle asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many United Kingdom staff are retained in the United Kingdom mission in Vientiane; and of what diplomatic grades.

Mr. Hurd: The British embassy, Vientiane, includes two United Kingdom-based Diplomatic Service officers: an ambassador (DS5) and a vice consul/administration officer (DS9).

Falkland Islands

Mr. Skeet asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many units of accommodation are available on the Falkland Islands; whether he has any information whether the 10,000 foreign military

personnel are billeted on Falkland Islanders or under canvas; and what is the normal temperature in the Falkland Islands in mid-winter.

Mr. Onslow: The last Falkland Islands census showed 589 occupied residential buildings and 58 unoccupied. We believe that a section of the Argentine forces are billeted in permanent accommodation, but the majority are encamped. The mid-winter climate in the Islands is similar to that of the Orkneys. Mean temperatures are about 36°F in July; the minimum temperature is about 12°F

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he will place advertisements in North and South American newspapers setting out the United Kingdom's juridical case on the Falkland Islands and the importance of self-determination by the Falkland Islanders.

Mr. Onslow: We are prepared to consider such action as and when it appears that it might be useful, but we see no need for such advertisements at present.

Mr. Arthur Lewis asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the number of persons he or his officials have recently seen who have been deported from or left voluntarily the Falkland Islands; whether this included former Captain Edmund P. Carlisle; and for what reasons such discussions ensued.

Mr. Onslow: All adult British citizens leaving the Falkland Islands since the Argentine invasion have been interviewed at some stage by British officials. The total number of such departures by 22 April was 204 (103 marines; 47 civilian males; 27 women; 27 children).

Mr. Edmund Carlisle was interviewed by Foreign and Commonwealth Office officials on 11 April to gain his account of the Argentine invasion and of conditions in the Falkland Islands.

Mr. Trotter asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether in the offer made to the British Government by General Galtieri via the United States Secretary of State, it was proposed that the United Kingdom would play a part in the administration of South Georgia.

Mr. Onslow: The present exchanges are delicate, and the British Government are unable to give details of the Argentine proposals or of our response at this stage. It remains the firm objective of the British Government to secure full Argentine withdrawal from the Falkland Islands and their dependencies.

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the number of persons in the Falkland Islands who are (a) tenants or (b) resident owner-occupiers of agricultural or pastoral land.

Mr. Onslow: There are two tenant farmers and 30 resident owner-occupiers.

Argentina

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing in chronological order the countries which have imposed sanctions of any kind on trade with Argentina, the nature of such sanctions and their duration.

Mr. Onslow: The following table shows the countries—apart from the United Kingdom—which have announced trade measures against Argentina, and what those measures were, in the order in which they were announced:

Canada—Embargo on all military supplies
Australia—Ban on imports; no new export credit commitments

European Community countries—Announcement of decisions to ban imports and embargo military supplies

Canada—Ban on imports; no new export credit commitments

Hong Kong—Ban on imports

New Zealand—Ban on imports and exports; arms and military material embargo; no new export credit commitments

European Community countries—Entry into force of import ban

Norway—Ban on imports

The European Community's ban on imports was introduced for a period of one month from 16 April. The announcements of all other measures did not state their duration.

Mr. Guy Barnett asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which European Economic Community countries have broken off diplomatic relations with Argentina.

Mr. Onslow: Only the United Kingdom has broken diplomatic relations with Argentina. The European Community has, however, given us prompt political and economic support for which we have expressed our gratitude.

Mr. Guy Barnett asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether European Economic Community countries have suspended export credits and removed trade preferences in respect of Argentina.

Mr. Onslow: On 14 April the European Community decided to place a complete embargo on all imports from Argentina. That decision came into force on 16 April. Not all member Governments have direct authority over their export credit institutions, but we do not expect that there will in present circumstances be any new offers of officially-supported export credits.

Mr. Guy Barnett asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which European Economic Community countries have so far not placed a ban on the export of arms, ammunition and military spare parts to Argentina.

Mr. Onslow: None.

Mr. Guy Barnett asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps have been taken by the Governments of Australia, New Zealand and Canada in respect of imports and exports, the supply of military equipment and in respect of diplomatic relations in relation to Argentina.

Mr. Onslow: The Governments of Australia, Canada and New Zealand have banned all imports from Argentina, stopped export credit and banned all sales of military equipment. New Zealand has also banned exports to Argentina, and landings by Argentine airlines. The Australian and Canadian Governments recalled their ambassadors for consultations. The New Zealand Government broke off diplomatic relations.

Dubai

Mr. Archie Hamilton asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if Her Majesty's embassy in Dubai will take up with the Government of Dubai the question of repayment of debts of £40,000 and £500,000 owed to Braithwaite and Co. Structural Limited and a fellow sub-contractor, Higgins and Cattle, respectively, in respect of an engineering contract completed in Dubai in 1978, which debts represent the proceeds of contract claims fully agreed between the main contractor Milne and Nicholls of Canada and the Municipality of Dubai.

Mr. Hurd: Our embassy in Dubai has on several occasions in the past year taken up with the Dubai authorities the question of the money owed to British sub-contractors in respect of this engineering contract. During a visit to Dubai last year I reinforced their representations, and have since instructed our consul general to keep the matter before the Ruler's advisers. Discussions continue between the municipality and representatives of all the firms concerned. Our embassy who remain in close touch with all the parties, will continue their efforts on behalf of the British firms.

South America

Mr. Dalyell asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has had any recent meetings in the United Kingdom with persons or bodies representative of South America opinion, other than members of diplomatic missions.

Mr. Onslow: There have been several meetings between Ministers and officials in my Department with representatives of Anglo-Argentine interests. If the hon. Member has any other people in mind whom he thinks it might be useful for us to meet, I hope he will let me know.

LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Parliamentarians (Pay and Allowances)

Mr. Mike Thomas asked the Lord President of the Council if he will publish any information available to him on the pay and allowances of parliamentarians in the European Economic Community, North America and the Commonwealth in the *Official Report*.

Mr. Biffen: The information given in the *Official Report* of 5 June 1981—[Vol. 5, c. 432-35]—is currently being updated, and I will publish the result in due course.

EMPLOYMENT

Sandwell

Mr. Snape asked the Secretary of State for Employment how many people, male and female, were placed in employment by jobcentres in the metropolitan borough of Sandwell in the last month for which statistics are available.

Mr. Alison: Jobcentres in the metropolitan borough of Sandwell placed 394 people—249 males and 145 females—in the four-week period ending 11 March 1982, the latest date for which statistics are available.

There is likely to have been a substantial number of people who found jobs in the area otherwise than through

DEFENCE

Claims Commission

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make it his practice, following the privatisation of the Ministry of Defence Claims Commission, to answer parliamentary questions from hon. Members relating to all matters on which he was previously prepared to answer questions.

Mr. Pattie: Fresh traffic accident and employers liability claims in the United Kingdom from 1 April this year will no longer be dealt with or settled by the Claims Commission but by the General Accident Fire and Life Assurance Corporation. It would not be appropriate for Ministers to be involved in questions relating to the settlement of these claims. General questions about those categories of claims where the Claims Commission continues to be responsible for settlement will be answered as in the past.

Argentina

Mr. Skinner asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the number of gear pumps, radio systems, propeller bolts and airspeed indicators ordered by Argentina in 1979, 1980 and 1981.

Mr. Frank Allaun asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the armaments sent to the Argentine in each of the past three years.

Mr. Hooley asked the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he will list the types of ships and aircraft of British design and manufacture currently in service with the Armed Forces of Argentina;

(2) whether any British military naval or air force equipment is currently being manufactured under licence in Argentina; and, if so, what;

(3) what radar, electronic, or other surveillance equipment has been supplied by British companies to Argentina during the past five years;

(4) whether any missile systems have been approved for export from the United Kingdom to Argentina during the past five years; and, if so, which;

(5) if he will list the British companies which have supplied weapons, aircraft, helicopters or fighting ships to Argentina since 1979.

Mr. Pattie: I would refer the hon. Members to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Warrington (Mr. Hoyle) on 21 April.—[Vol. 22, c. 111-12].

Mr. Hooley asked the Secretary of State for Defence on how many occasions in the past five years invitations have been given to representatives of the Armed Forces of Argentina to attend annual displays of British military or air force equipment.

Mr. Pattie: In keeping with our relations with Argentina prior to the invasion of the Falkland Islands, representatives from the Argentine Armed Forces have been invited to all major defence equipment exhibitions in the last 5 years.

Mr. Skinner asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many export licences were issued to Argentina in 1979, 1980 and 1981.

Mr. Peter Rees: I have been asked to reply.

It has been the normal practice of successive Governments not to disclose information on licences issued for exports to particular countries.

Animals (Experiments)

Mr. Skinner asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will take steps to abolish the practice of using animals in experiments carried out by the Chemical Defence Establishment at Porton Down for the purpose of testing chemical and biological warfare agents; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Pattie: No. The Chemical Defence Establishment at Porton Down is the United Kingdom centre for defensive work on chemical agents that may be used against our forces in war. The United Kingdom, of course, does not possess chemical and biological weapons and has no plans to acquire them. The Warsaw Pact has a massive offensive chemical warfare capability, with large stocks of chemical agents deployed in forward areas, together with the necessary munitions for their delivery. In these circumstances it would be irresponsible not to develop the means to protect our forces. Although alternatives are used whenever possible, animal experiments form a small but very necessary part of this work.

Mr. Bidwell asked the Secretary of State for Defence what animals are used for experimental purposes at the Chemical Defence Establishment at Porton Down.

Mr. Pattie: Guinea pigs, mice and rats are the kinds most used. Others used include principally monkeys, pigs and rabbits.

Falkland Islands

Mr. Cryer asked the Secretary of State for Defence what is the estimated cost (a) of compensation payable as a result of the requisitioning and (b) of charter fees payable in respect of merchant vessels for the Falkland Islands naval task force; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Blaker: It is too early to estimate the total cost of either the requisitioned or the chartered vessels.

Sir Patrick Wall asked the Secretary of State for Defence if, in view of the fact that at least seven of the ships stated to be for disposal in the answer of 1 February to the hon. Member for Harrogate (Mr. Banks), *Official Report*, c. 42, are now on operational service in the Falkland Islands, he will now remove their names from the disposal list.

Mr. Blaker: Only three of the ships listed in the answer of 1 February to my hon. Friend the Member for Harrogate (Mr. Banks)—[Vol. 17, c. 42]—are at present on operational service in the South Atlantic. Two of these had already been removed from the disposal list before the present crisis arose. The only ship in the South Atlantic which is still on the disposal list is HMS "Endurance" and we are considering her future.

Sir Patrick Wall asked the Secretary of State for Defence what bonus is being paid to crews of Royal Fleet Auxiliary and merchant ships which are taking part in the Falkland Islands operations.

Mr. Blaker: For any service within the maritime exclusion zone Royal Fleet Auxiliary crews will receive, in addition to their normal pay, a sum equivalent to 150

per cent. of normal United Kingdom rates of pay. Crews of merchant ships chartered or requisitioned by the Ministry of Defence will also receive 150 per cent. enhancement of pay for service in support of the Falklands operation in a larger and differently defined area of the South Atlantic.

Mr. Proctor asked the Secretary of State for Defence if the instructions to the Forces concerning the maritime exclusion zone around the Falkland Islands which came into operation at 0400 Greenwich mean time on 12 April have been modified; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Blaker: It is not the practice to disclose details of operational orders given to our forces.

Overseas Allowance

Sir Patrick Wall asked the Secretary of State for Defence why the overseas allowance due to some ships' companies who have recently been abroad has been reduced.

Mr. Blaker: I refer my hon. Friend to my answer to the question by the Member for Halesowen and Stourbridge (Mr. Stokes) on 21 April 1982. No changes in the sea-going rate of local overseas allowance have been made recently apart from the introduction of a standard rate for military personnel serving with the Falkland Islands task force, most of whom would otherwise have received no local overseas allowance.—[Vol. 22, c. 111.]

Warships

Sir Patrick Wall asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will name the warships that are due to enter service by 1988 and give the date on which their keels were laid down.

Mr. Pattie: All warships currently ordered are expected to be completed before the end of 1988. Not all of these vessels have yet had their keels laid. Details are as follows:

Class and Ship	Keel laid
<i>Fleet Submarines (SSNs)</i>	
HMS "Trafalgar"	25 April 1979
HMS "Turbulent"	8 May 1980
HMS "Tireless" 16	28 October 1981 *26 June 1981
<i>Carriers</i>	
HMS "Illustrious"	7 October 1976
HMS "Ark Royal"	14 December 1978
<i>Type 42 Destroyers</i>	
HMS "Nottingham"	6 February 1978
HMS "Liverpool"	5 July 1978
HMS "Manchester"	19 May 1978
HMS "Gloucester"	25 October 1979
HMS "Edinburgh"	8 September 1980
HMS "York"	18 January 1980
<i>Type 22 Frigates</i>	
HMS "Brazen"	19 August 1978

Class and Ship	Keel laid
HMS "Boxer"	5 November 1979
HMS "Beaver"	20 June 1980
07	2 April 1982
08	*23 February 1982
<i>MCMVs</i>	
HMS "Cottesmore"	27 September 1979
HMS "Brocklesby"	8 May 1980
HMS "Middleton"	1 July 1980
HMS "Dulverton"	1 June 1981
09	*19 June 1980
11	*19 June 1980
<i>Seabed Operations Vessel</i>	
HMS "Challenger"	21 January 1980

* Order Date.

I cannot speculate on the delivery date of ships not yet ordered.

Standby Squadron

Mr. Speed asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the last group of ships to form the standby squadron and the date and destination of their departure from it.

Mr. Blaker: The most recent group of ships to join the Standby Squadron in Chatham comprised HMS "Lynx" in 1976, HMS "Lincoln" in 1977, HM ships "Mohawk", "Nubian" and "Zulu" in 1979, and HM ships "Blake", "Gurkha", "Eskimo", "Tartar" and "Falmouth" in 1980 and HMS "Berwick" in February 1981. HM ships "Blake" and "Mohawk" were allocated to the disposal list (scrap) in December 1980 and April 1981 respectively. The others were allocated to the disposal list (sales) in 1981, as follows:

April 1981—"Lynx", "Tartar", "Gurkha", "Eskimo", "Zulu", "Nubian" and "Lincoln".

September 1981—"Berwick" and "Falmouth".

"Uganda"

Mr. Hoyle asked the Secretary of State for Defence, further to the answer of 21 April, concerning the Asian nationals in the crew of the "Uganda", *Official Report*, c. 111, whether they will be eligible for compensation or a pension if they are wounded or killed while the vessel is operating as a hospital ship; whether their position has been discussed with their respective Governments and what response was received; and why, in view of the high rate of unemployment in the United Kingdom, British seamen were not recruited for this task.

Mr. Blaker: Agreements with the Indian National Maritime Board cover the payment of enhanced death and disability compensation in circumstances such as now exist in the case of the "Uganda". The standard benefits for widows and dependants would also apply in these circumstances. The arrangements for crewing the "Uganda", which is carrying a higher proportion of British crew than is normally the case, were agreed by the ship owners with the unions concerned.

This line is not yet in use as FCO are working on words to amplify the PM's answer in the House. He referred to prisoners and that they are not POWs. In fact it appears that they should be treated as POWs even though they were not taken as a result of war. W.26/4.

NOTE TO PRESS OFFICERS

Falklands

Argentines on South Georgia : Prisoners of War Question

The four Geneva Conventions in 1949 apply not only to war but armed conflict between two States and all cases of partial or total occupation of territory. Geneva conventions have thus applied to the Falklands since 2 April.

The Argentine soldiers therefore captured by the British on South Georgia are Prisoners of War and will be dealt with in accordance with the Geneva Conventions.

Civilian Detainees

The civilians whose presence on South Georgia was illegal have been detained and are to be returned to Argentina.

GJ
26 April 1982

Cleared with Mr Williams and
Mr Aust, Legal Adviser
MOD Press Office informed