

MOD PRESS BRIEFING 29/4/82 1200 HRS HELD IN HISTORIC ROOM 27

- Q. Have there been any indications that the Argentine navy have moved any closer to the MEZ?
- A. From time to time there are changes in some of the dispositions but we are still covered by the general statement that the majority of them are out of port and skirting the mainland within the 200 miles.
- Q. What about the Bulwark being dragged out?
- A. It is on the disposal list as you know. We are looking at it as an option but no decision of any kind has been taken. It does not necessarily follow, however, that because it is being looked at a decision will be taken to bring it back.
- Q. Where is Bulwark at the moment?
- A. Portsmouth.
- Q. Were spares taken out of the Bulwark to keep the Hermes going?
- A. They may well have been - I don't really know.
- Q. I thought the Bulwark was no longer safe and was being dismantled?
- A. It is being destored, but all facts will be taken into account in any decision made.
- Q. Is any consideration being given to any other aircraft being deployed in any role in this dispute or are you limiting it to the Vulcan?
- A. In as far as deployments are concerned, that is an operational matter and I cannot comment.
- Q. What about the QEII?
- A. No further decisions on chartering or requisitioning have been taken.
- Q. What is the result of the Inquiry into the incident involving the Argentine soldier who died?
- A. We are awaiting the report.
- Q. Can you give us any more detail of what happened now?
- A. Unfortunately I can give no further details. The information we have is not in all respects clear and so I can say no further until I have the complete story.
- Q. Where are the prisoners at the moment?
- A. I am not sure but I think they are in South Georgia.
- Q. When are they due to move?
- A. I only know they are to be returned to Argentina.

- Q. Can you give us the names of the men who died?
- A. I have no information that the next of kin was informed?
- Q. Can you confirm that there was a second to die on a submarine?
- A. My latest knowledge is that he was given skilled medical attention and is as well as the situation allows.
- Q. Is Exeter part of the Task Force?
- A. You know, I never talk about that. She is not involved in any military action.
- Q. Why can't you tell us about any other aircraft which could be involved?
- A. Where we may be or may not be considering possibilities in the future there is no advantage in giving that information.
- Q. Why has Admiral Woodward completely changed his tune?
- A. I cannot be sure at this distance exactly why he may have said things.
- Q. Can you tell us about any British ships damaged in the S Georgia incident?
- A. When I have the information I will give it to you as a statement.
- Q. What is your full statement about the Exeter?
- A. I am not going to say where it is or what it is doing but I am able to say that it has not been involved in any military action and that puts paid to the stories about it.
- Q. When you say military action it can mean all sorts of things?
- A. I mean them all.
- Q. Yesterday the Argentines reported that they stopped lifting stuff into Port Stanley because of the weather?
- A. I can confirm that the weather is very bad.
- Q. The Brazilians said that they have been given two names of people who had died - one a Corporal soon after undergoing an operation on his leg and secondly the incident we talked about yesterday. They told us that in both cases the name was only revealed once the next of kin was informed. In some way the full facts are not clear - is the Corporal still alive.
- A. The FCO on behalf of the Government passed over to the Brazilian authorities in London the name of one Argentine who had died. The only information that I have about the person whose leg was amputated is that he received good and skillful medical treatment and is as well as can be expected in his condition. No information was given to me that he is dead and certainly only one name was passed on to the Brazilian authorities. I will not go any further.
- Q. I thought he was a leading seaman?
- A. I don't know that detail - if we said he was then he was.

Q. Do you have the tonnage of the Saxonia and is it possible that the Press Office could have an updated list of all the ships?

A. We will get this.