

MOD PRESS BRIEFING 3/5/82 1230 HRS

- Q. Can you give us any idea of the timescale for the despatch of the reserves?
- A. I am afraid I can't - that is all under operational shroud at present.
- Q. Can you tell us when we will be able to see the pictures of the damage at Port Stanley?
- A. As soon as possible.
- Q. The cruiser attacked was outside the TEZ - does this zone include the entire S Atlantic?
- A. We have made 3 announcements: the MEZ, TEZ and also a defensive area around elements of our Task Force. The Argentine Government was informed that any vessel or aircraft which, within or without the zone, meant a threat to our Task Force would be dealt with appropriately.
- Q. Did the cruiser in any way attack any part of the Task Force before being attacked?
- A. The cruiser posed a threat by its presence. You don't wait to be attacked before you respond to something whose presence is a threat.
- Q. Are there to be any substantial conversions done to the QEII before it is ready for use?
- A. Yes, we believe that there will be some work required. A small amount of work will be necessary but we are still awaiting details.
- Q. Have you any reports on the movements of the Argentine Task Force?
- A. Movements of our Task Force and the Argentine Task Force are not revealed.
- Q. Was the cruiser that was attacked very far outside the zone or on the edge of the zone?
- A. Just outside the zone.
- Q. How big were the vessels that were sunk?
- A. Not absolutely sure so we chose a description of which we are sure. I cannot give you names.
- Q. Are they motor-boats or something larger than that?
- A. A type of patrol boat of moderate size.
- Q. Was it the intention to sink the cruiser?
- A. If a shot was fired it was fired to sink.
- Q. What military assistance are you looking for from the USA?
- A. That is under consideration at present - I have no further information or details.

Q. Do you have any information on the possible retrieval of any casualties from the Argentine vessels?

A. Life-saving equipment was dropped. I have no further information than that.

Q. Will any casualties that were retrieved be treated as prisoners of war or as the prisoners from S Georgia were treated?

A. The Argentines are being treated fully in accordance with the Geneva Conventions. The same would apply to any other Argentine captured in the present situation.

Q. Can you tell us where the QEII is now?

A. Due in Southampton tonight.

Q. Will 5 Bde be aboard?

A. Certainly elements of 5 Bde will be on it.

Q. How much will it cost to requisition the QEII?

A. That is a question for the Dept of Trade.