

NOTE TO PRESS OFFICERS

FALKLANDS: EC MEETING, BRUSSELS, 4 MAY 1982

Line to take

There will be a meeting of the Political Committee (senior officials political directors) at 3.00 pm today in Brussels to discuss the situation in the South Atlantic. The meeting was called by the Belgian Presidency after consultations with the UK. Today's meeting is a continuation of the close consultation which we have maintained with our Community partners throughout the Falklands crisis. Mr Julian Bullard, Deputy to the PUS and Political Director, will represent the UK. The meeting will discuss the present situation and possible ways of bringing about a solution.

Other points to draw on, as necessary

UKREP Brussels will be referring press enquiries after the meeting to the Presidency, other than those about the UK position which they will refer to us. Mr Bullard is not aiming to speak to the press after the meeting (due to finish about 5.00 pm Brussels time).

We take suitable opportunities, 2/3 times a week, to give some kind of briefing to our Community partners at official, ambassadorial or ministerial level, depending on meetings, visits, etc. This meeting is the latest opportunity to brief our colleagues, in the context of Mr Pym's visit over the weekend to Washington and New York. The discussion will also serve as preparation for the informal meeting of Foreign Ministers on 8/9 May (near Liège), which is also expected to discuss the Falklands crisis.

An EC meeting of senior officials - ad hoc group of Genscher/Colombo proposals, including some political directors, which was set up some time ago, has been taking place yesterday and today. So the meeting on the Falklands has been fitted in at the same venue.

Erosion of support for UK position?

Please see Q/A of Mr Pym's Washington press conference on 2 May

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which was, in part: 'Q - Are you concerned that if there is escalation some of the support you have got on sanctions and the enthusiasm may drift away? A - No. I am confident that the support we have will continue. If it drags on for a long time, which of course we hope it doesn't, it may happen that one or two changes might be sought ..... but the whole weight so far has been an increase in pressure. I have no indication ..... of any kind that that support is in any way weakening. Rather the reverse.'

The Belgian President of the EC Council of Foreign Ministers (Tindemans) was reported as having said yesterday at a news conference in Brussels that 'nothing has changed' in the Community policy of support for Britain in the Falkland Islands crisis. There has been no pressure by members of the EC to change its policy now that fighting has erupted in and near the Falklands. 'Nothing has changed for the moment and there is no tendency to change it', Tindemans said.

TJ

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