

LOBBY BRIEFING

time: 5 PM date: 9.5.82

We reported that the Prime Minister had been at Chequers all weekend and would return to No 10 that evening. After lunch that day there had been a meeting of the Group of Ministers concerned with the Falklands - the usual Group plus Cranley Onslow, attending in case Mr Pym did not return in time (Mr Pym had in fact returned at about 2 pm). We indicated that the meeting was predominantly concerned with the diplomatic activity now going on in New York. Ministers had taken stock of the situation. As our Ambassador to the UN had said the day before, negotiations were on the move with a sense of great urgency though we were not yet at a stage where the UN Secretary General was showing each side the other's responses. We thought the Secretary General might synthesise soon and take the procedure a stage further. Perez de Cuella had seen both sides twice the day before and would see them again that day. (the UK at about 7 pm London time). The purpose at present was to arrive at a definition of the position of each side in advance of the Secretary General putting the two together. We reiterated the point about the 502 requirement, no unconditional ceasefire, and no pre-judging on the long term outcome.

We also reported on the informal meeting of Foreign Ministers in Belgium mentioning Mr Tindemans talk of solid support and reminder of the terms of 502. No decisions had been taken on the Mandate or on Falklands sanctions, nor were any expected. Sanctions ran until 17 May and we assumed renewal if necessary.

We drew attention to the two statements issued by MoD that day concerning the activity to maintain the Total Exclusion Zone and maintain the pressure on the Argentines and also the arrangements for the repatriation of Argentine prisoners taken during the South Georgia action.

Asked if the military situation had moved into a new phase, we said we of course would not comment on operational matters but we had been keeping up the pressure since 12 April.

We counselled caution when looking at reported views from the Argentine Foreign Minister on the question of sovereignty.

We emphasised that we had give no ultimatum nor set any deadline, though we repeated the point about the need to avoid being shunted into a siding while the Argentines played for time. We were pursuing the UN proposals with urgency. It was reasonable to assume that that afternoon's Ministerial meeting would study reports from the Ambassador and give him fresh instructions for his further meetings. Asked about the possibility of military action if all else failed, we left the Lobby in no doubt that, as Mr Nott had made clear on television that day, if it proves impossible to negotiate the Argentines off the Islands we would have to forceably remove them.

Asked if there was not a contradiction between the need to cherish and nurture the diplomatic effort while apparently aggravating the Argentines on the Island with military action, we said we saw no contradiction - we had always matched diplomacy with strength.

We asked the Lobby not to jump to any conclusions or speculate too much on operational matters. We had to keep the Argentines guessing and keep the security of our own forces in mind. Of course bombing of Argentine bases was an option but we would not encourage the Lobby to believe it was going to be done. Equally, we did not encourage the Lobby to regard a long term blockade as anything more than another option. Obviously the passage of time had its effect. The soldiers on the Islands were beleaguered, the Argentine fleet was confined to within 12 miles of its home coast and the economy was going to pot - we had heard reports that six finance houses had collapsed so far.

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My hon. Friend's Bill is to be commended for the attention that it pays to the practical workings of the "private gain" test. Clause 2 will greatly assist the prosecution in proving private gain, particularly by ensuring that such ruses as inflated cloakroom charges will not offer a means of evasion. At the same time it ensures that non-commercial members' clubs—about which the hon. Member for Halifax expressed concern—will not be caught inadvertently by the private gain test simply because the proceeds of an exhibition benefit individuals as members of a club.

Having considered the way in which the Bill will bring the bogus clubs within the cinema licensing system, it is right to ask how the cinema licensing authorities will exercise their powers. The hon. Lady seemed concerned at the extent to which cinema licensing authorities appeared content to rely on the judgment of the British Board of Film Censors. She said on Second Reading that only about 70 cinema licensing authorities take a regular interest in the subject.

The Government made clear in last June's debate that they believe that there is a great deal to be said in favour of retaining local authority participation. But we would not go as far as the hon. Lady in suggesting that local authorities ought to be involved routinely in viewing films. It seems perfectly reasonable that a licensing authority should choose to rely on the British Board of Film Censors, although reserving its right to review a particular film if it thinks that there is cause to do so and, if necessary, to differ from the boards's judgment. I do not believe that the fact that the great majority of cinema licensing authorities are largely content to rely on the board is a matter which is to be deplored.

My hon. Friend's Bill also makes some very useful reforms in the administrative arrangements governing the cinema licensing system. It is right, as the House accepted in discussing the amendments tabled by my hon. Friend, that the fire authority should be given a clear locus in those arrangements. It is understandable that the censorship aspects of the cinema licensing system should attract most attention, but it is often forgotten that its original purpose—even recently the Williams committee called it its "main purpose"—was to provide for the physical safety of those attending cinematograph exhibitions. It is interesting to note that the 1909 Act simply spoke of

"An Act to make better provision for securing safety at Cinematograph and other Exhibitions".

Only in 1952 was it made clear that the licensing authority's powers included censorship.

I am sure that anyone who has had cause to consult, the existing legislation will appreciate the case for consolidating it in one comprehensive measure on cinematograph exhibitions. We shall give serious consideration to the possibility of such a measure, and the steps that are being taken in my hon. Friend's Bill will pave the way for that. That in itself is a good reason for urging that the Bill be given a Third Reading and rapid passage to the statute book. I have not the slightest hesitation in saying that it is an extremely worthwhile measure which deserves the support of the House as a whole.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read the Third time and passed.

It being Eleven o'clock, MR. SPEAKER interrupted the proceedings, pursuant to Standing Order No. 5 (Friday sittings).

Falkland Islands

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Francis Pym): The House is aware that, while we have mobilised and dispatched the task force to the South Atlantic, where it has already been involved in active operations, we have also been pursuing a highly active programme of consultation and negotiation in the search for a diplomatic solution to the present crisis.

The House has shown exemplary patience with my inability to explain the nature of the proposals that we have been examining. I now have to report to the House that Argentine intransigence has again led it to reject proposals for a diplomatic solution. In these circumstances, I think it is right that I should give the House an account of where we stand—and of where we intend to go from here.

The fact that we were able to reach a point where a new set of firm proposals could be put to both sides owes much to the tireless efforts of Mr. Haig. We are also grateful for the constructive contributions of President Belaunde of Peru. We also put forward practical ideas ourselves which take account of the Argentine position as well as our own.

Yesterday we signified that we were willing to accept and implement immediately an interim agreement which would prepare the way for a definitive settlement. Such an agreement would have demonstrated substantial flexibility on our part. If it had been accepted by the Argentines, the ceasefire, which would have been firmly linked to the beginning of Argentine withdrawal could have come into effect as early as 5 o'clock this afternoon.

The interim agreement under discussion yesterday included the following elements: first, complete and supervised withdrawal of Argentine forces from the Falkland Islands, matched by corresponding withdrawal of British forces; secondly, an immediate ceasefire as soon as Argentina accepted the agreement and agreed to withdraw; thirdly, appointment of a small group of countries acceptable to both sides which would supervise withdrawal, undertake the interim administration in consultation with the islander's elected representatives, and perhaps help in negotiations for a definitive agreement on the status of the islands, without prejudice to our principles or to the wishes of the islanders; fourthly, suspension of the existing exclusion zones and the lifting of economic sanctions.

This agreement would not, of course, have prejudged in any way the outcome of the negotiations about the future. As the House knows, that is a sticking point for us. Pending the outcome of the negotiations, the two sides would simply have acknowledged the difference that exists between them over the status of the islands.

We have worked, and will continue to work, positively and constructively for a peaceful solution. Our agreement to these ideas make this once again abundantly clear.

I wish I could say that the Argentine junta had been working in a similar spirit; clearly it was not. The Argentines have so far insisted that a transfer of sovereignty to them should be a precondition of negotiations on a final settlement. The Argentines talk much of the need for decolonisation of the islands. What they appear to mean by this is colonisation by themselves.

In addition to this, the Argentines seem now to be obstructing progress in another but equally fundamental way. They appear to be asking for a ceasefire without any clear link with a withdrawal of their invasion force. To

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grant this would be to leave them indefinitely in control of people and territory which they had illegally seized, and to deny ourselves the right of pursuing our own self-defence under article 51 of the charter.

We have not allowed Argentine military activities to halt the measures which our task force is taking. We will not allow their diplomatic obstructionism to do so either. Nor will they be allowed to halt our vigorous endeavours to find a peaceful way out of the conflict into which they have led us. This is why I welcomed and co-operated wholeheartedly with the initiatives of Mr. Haig, and why I now welcome the efforts of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and am working closely with him.

As the House knows, the Secretary-General has put to both us and Argentina some ideas as a framework around which progress might be made. The Argentine Government claim to have accepted these ideas. We are bound to be sceptical of this claim. There is no indication that Argentina has accepted either that she must withdraw, as resolution 502 demands, or that negotiations cannot, as Argentina insists, be made conditional on the transfer of sovereignty to her. Indeed, it is difficult to believe that Argentina, having rejected ideas devised by Mr. Haig and the President of Peru, can now accept the Secretary-General's ideas which have such a similar basis.

For our part, we have accepted the general approach set out by the Secretary-General. I sent him yesterday a positive and substantive reply, making clear that the elements for a solution put forward by him were close to those which had been the basis of our efforts since the beginning of the crisis.

I made clear at the same time that in our view resolution 502 must be implemented without delay; that an unconditional ceasefire could not under any circumstances be regarded by us as a step towards this; and that implementation of a ceasefire must be unambiguously linked to the commencement of Argentine withdrawal which must be completed within a fixed number of days. I then went on to give details, which it would not be right to reveal to the House now, of what we would be prepared to accept to fill out the framework suggested by him.

If one phase of diplomatic effort has been brought to an end by Argentine intransigence, another phase is already under way in New York. The aim remains the same: to secure the early implementation of resolution 502. We are working urgently and constructively with the Secretary-General to this end. I hope the Argentines will henceforth show that readiness and desire to reach a peaceful settlement which so far has been evident only on our side. If they do not, then let them be in no doubt that we shall do whatever may be necessary to end their unlawful occupation. Our resolve is undiminished.

It remains the Government's highest priority to achieve an early negotiated settlement if that is humanly possible.

Mr. Denis Healey (Leeds, East): I think that all of us in the House deeply regret the breakdown of the initiatives taken by Mr Haig and President Belaunde. I think that the whole House will also share the Foreign Secretary's concern that it is only the intransigence of the Argentine Government which has prevented a ceasefire from taking place today.

I welcome very much what the right hon. Gentleman said about using the United Nations now as the channel for

negotiation. I draw the attention of the House to the remarks yesterday of our ambassador there, Sir Anthony Parsons, who said that

"the United Nations is the only negotiating mechanism in the field now."

He went on to say that he had

"enormous confidence in the Secretary-General."

I hope that the right hon. Gentleman will draw those remarks to the attention of those of his hon. Friends who spare no effort to denigrate the efficiency and impartiality of the United Nations as an organisation.

Now that the United Nations is the centre of our efforts for a diplomatic solution, may I put a number of points to the Foreign Secretary?

First, in the light of the Argentine Government's refusal to implement resolution 502, will he seek broader support among the United Nations for economic sanctions against the Argentine? In particular, will he ask the United States Administration to go somewhat further than they went in their announcement last week?

Secondly, will the right hon. Gentleman seek to involve the United Nations not only as an intermediary in contacts between the British and Argentine Governments but as an active participant in an ultimate settlement. In particular, now that the Argentines have rejected the American-Peruvian proposals for multinational interim administration, will he seek to persuade the United Nations to provide a transitional administration after the withdrawal of Argentine troops? Will he also explore the possibilities of a United Nations trusteeship over the islands as a long-term solution, as we suggested a fortnight ago?

Finally, will the right hon. Gentleman assure the House that Her Majesty's Government will respect the advice given by the Secretary-General of the United Nations last week that neither side should seek to broaden the conflict? In particular, will he reject firmly and absolutely pressure from his hon. or right hon. Friends to bomb the airfields on the mainland? This would be a far more difficult and hazardous enterprise than even a mass direct assault on the island of the East Falklands. It would be likely to involve loss of civilian life. It would dismay our friends. It could bring other countries in Latin America into active military support of the Argentine Government.

Mr. Pym: I am grateful to the right hon. Gentleman for what he said at the start of his remarks. The whole House, I think, shares the concern about the breakdown of efforts.

My reply to the first point that the right hon. Gentleman raised is "Yes, Sir." We want the broadest possible support from as many countries as possible for further economic measures. I discussed this matter with Mr. Haig last weekend. The United States has not closed its mind to the possibility of taking further economic measures. Our strategy from the outset has been to build the pressures of the three varieties that we have often spoken about. We have undoubtedly increased pressure in all three areas throughout the period, and that still applies today. We want that to continue into the future with the support of our friends in Europe and the Commonwealth which they have so far shown. If others come along too, that can only be helpful in the overall strategy.

Whether or not the Secretary-General and the United Nations become involved in the transitional administration remains to be seen. At the moment the Secretary-General is waiting to hear what kind of response he gets from

Argentina. That is by no means certain. As to the longer term, I certainly would not rule out, and I did not do so in the the House the other day, the possibility of trusteeship. Indeed, the British Government's long-term position has been not to rule out anything, but always without prejudice to what those living on the islands prefer.

I assure the right hon. Gentleman that the Government have no desire whatever to escalate military action, let alone to broaden the field of military activity. Clearly, our concern is to confine it. At this point, one cannot rule out any option. That must not be taken by the House to mean anything specific. What we are doing is to ensure that our task force has orders appropriate to the circumstances in which it is engaged in the South Atlantic while, at the same time, we put our maximum weight, effort and emphasis on the attempts that we are making to achieve a negotiated settlement.

Mr. Norman St. John-Stevas (Chelmsford): Is my right hon. Friend aware that, despite Argentine obstructiveness and culpability, if he continues resolutely and intrepidly to pursue a peaceful solution he will have the support of the House? However, will he bear in mind in the negotiations that the one thing that is paramount in this situation is the safety and security of our British task force?

Mr. Pym: I am very grateful to my right hon. Friend. The safety and security of our task force is uppermost in our minds. It is very much uppermost all the time in the minds of my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister and all my right hon. and hon. Friends in the Government.

Dr. David Owen (Plymouth, Devonport): Is the Foreign Secretary aware that we support his firm stand in insisting that there must be a clear link between any ceasefire and a withdrawal of the Argentine forces? It would be incompatible with resolution 502 were any such proposition to be put to the Security Council, and I hope and believe that it never would be done. Although the right hon. Gentleman has been generous in terms of the strategic trust area for the longer term, will he accept that this is close to the points contained in his proposals for the interim? Does the right hon. Gentleman accept that it would certainly serve to give the lie to those who claim that we are a colonial power or that we have any wish to do anything other than to resist aggression and to protect the interests of the Falkland Islanders if the British Government stated clearly that they would accept the voluntary placement of the Falkland Islands as a strategic trust area with British administration and protect it for our strategic interests with our veto power in the Security Council?

Mr. Pym: I am grateful for what the right hon. Gentleman has said about the linkage between the ceasefire and withdrawal. That has always seemed to us to be critically important.

On his second point, I am not in the business of ruling out anything even in the short term in relation to possible interim arrangements. I assure the right hon. Gentleman that I am in the business of keeping doors open and not closing them.

Mr. Julian Amery (Brighton, Pavilion): I fully support my right hon. Friend in seeking a peaceful settlement, although the means so far put forward seem

unpromising, but will he give an assurance that in no way shall we hold back the military commanders from achieving our objectives by military means if necessary?

Mr. Pym: I can give my right hon. Friend that assurance. The position at the moment, as my right hon. Friend knows, is that the task force is securing the total exclusion zone. That it is undoubtedly doing. There is a range of military options in the future upon which we could well have to take a decision, or a series of decisions, if these efforts fail and circumstances alter. They are very much in our mind. I can certainly give the assurance that my right hon. Friend wants.

Mr. Tony Benn (Bristol, South-East): Will the Foreign Secretary clarify Government policy in some important areas? First, does he rule out any United Nations appeal for a ceasefire that falls short of total agreement to the withdrawal of all Argentine forces? Secondly, does he reject General Haig's proposal published a week ago that the Argentines should be involved in the administration of the islands meanwhile? Thirdly, does he still insist upon British sovereignty subject to the islanders' veto? Fourthly, has he had assurances from President Reagan that American support would continue if British forces were used to bomb the airfields on the Argentine mainland?

Mr. Pym: The first point is ruled out. The connection and linkage between ceasefire and withdrawal is included within resolution 502. It is vital that they go together. As to the proposals—indeed, more than one series of proposals—that have been put by the United States and latterly by the United States and Peru to the Argentines, these have been rejected by the Argentines and any further consideration of them does not therefore arise.

So far as interim arrangements are concerned, I would not like to say that we have ruled out any particular options. One can imagine that interim arrangements that put Argentina in a dominant position would be totally unacceptable, but I have kept our options open.

On the issue of British sovereignty, our position is that this is British sovereign territory. We are totally clear about that. We acknowledge, however, that the Argentines feel that they have a claim to it. We believe that that claim is invalid but acknowledge that they have that claim. Let that be negotiated about in a peaceful way. That is perhaps the crunch point.

The right hon. Gentleman's last point has not arisen at the moment. I can only say that President Reagan and the United States Administration have, as the right hon. Gentleman knows, come down firmly on the British side. They are giving us all the support that they can but are not intending to become militarily involved. Mr. Haig announced the basis upon which the United States was supporting us. We are grateful for that. We respect the basis on which the United States supports us.

Sir Anthony Kershaw (Stroud): Does my right hon. Friend agree that the course of the negotiations so far with Peru and Mr. Haig seems to indicate that Argentina backs off as soon as proposals become more specific? Does this not indicate that the Argentines are perfectly willing to negotiate provided that they get 100 per cent. of what they ask? Is that a satisfactory position?

Mr. Pym: It is not a satisfactory position. What is to be put to the test now is the response of the Argentines to

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the Secretary-General. We want to see what it is. They have given the impression by statements, many of which, if not most of which, as the House knows, have been very misleading, that they have accepted it. I have already remarked that we are sceptical about that. We want to find out—no doubt we shall find out in the next few days—what has been their response. We shall then see whether or not we are in business.

Mr. David Alton (Liverpool, Edge Hill): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the Liberal Party continues to support the Government's initiatives to try to secure a solution and that we join others in the House in lamenting the fact that the Peruvian initiative has failed? Will the right hon. Gentleman give an assurance that members of the task force, who are clearly in some danger, will be left in no doubt that the additional Harriers that are on their way to the South Atlantic in the "Atlantic Conveyor" container vessel will soon be there to give the necessary air cover to ensure the air exclusion zone? Will he also accept that my right hon. and hon. Friends and I join other Opposition Members in looking towards a United Nations solution based on trusteeship?

Mr. Pym: I am grateful for what the hon. Gentleman has said. I think that I can give him the assurances for which he asks. I can also tell him that the morale of the task force is very high indeed. It is setting about its work with the professionalism that we have come to expect from all our Services. It is, of course, aware of what is going on and what reinforcements are coming up behind. I assure the hon. Gentleman that the morale of our troops is very high indeed.

Mr. Patrick Cormack (Staffordshire, South-West): Is my right hon. Friend aware that he deserves the thanks and congratulations of the House on the tireless way in which he has striven to achieve a peaceful solution? Is he also aware that the Government fully deserve complete support for any measures that they and our task force commanders consider sensible and feasible? Will he please use whatever channels he can to impress on the Argentines that if we have to repossess the islands by force it will become extremely difficult to contemplate the sort of package that was on offer yesterday?

Mr. Pym: I am grateful for what my hon. Friend has said. Of course, if all endeavours to reach a sensible, reasonable and fair settlement by peaceful means fail, nobody is in doubt about what we shall do. We cannot allow the occupation of the islands to continue.

Several Hon. Members *rose*—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I think it wise for us to have another five minutes on questions. We shall probably have further statements on the issue.

Mr. Reginald Freeson (Brent, East): Is it not clear that the recent escalation of military activity has contributed nothing to diplomatic success and that while negotiations continue our paramount concern should be to avoid the loss of more lives, from whatever source? Until it is clear that the present diplomatic initiatives and the new wave of negotiations are completed, any action that would result in the death of anybody should be suspended.

Mr. Pym: I regret to say that I completely disagree with the right hon. Gentleman. I have not the slightest iota

of doubt that the sustained build up of military pressure has had, and is having, its effect. Our securing and protecting of the total exclusion zone is an indispensable element in any possibility of achieving a peaceful result.

Mr. Raymond Whitney (Wycombe): May I congratulate the Government on the skill, resolve and patience that they have demonstrated in handling this immensely difficult dispute? Will my right hon. Friend make sure that every means available to the Government is employed to bring home to world opinion, in its understandable anxiety about a potential increase in armed conflict, that it should not overlook the fact that the Argentine aggressors have continued over the past five weeks blatantly to disregard resolution 502, have sabotaged the heroic efforts of Mr. Haig through his peace proposals, and have now sabotaged the proposals of their Latin American ally, President Belaunde of Peru?

Mr. Pym: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for raising that point, which is extremely important. It has not been possible hitherto to give anything but the most elementary outline of what might be the elements of a settlement to bring about a withdrawal, and we have, in a sense, been handicapped, compared with the propaganda effort of the Argentines. Although much of it has been misleading, they have been able to say whatever they like and some countries and people are apt to believe what they say.

I hope that what I have said to the House today, which I will convey to the press in all other countries in a conference that I am to hold when I leave the House, will start to put right what has hitherto been an inevitable and unavoidable omission in what we have been able to say. I think that it is clear after what I have said in the House that we have gone as far as we reasonably could to try to get a settlement. Proposals of more or less the same type, though they were different, have twice been rejected by the Argentines and we shall have to see what response they give to the Secretary-General.

I am conscious of the most important point raised by my hon. Friend and we shall do everything that we can to convey the facts to public opinion in other countries, which is no less important or significant in the conflict than is the opinion of our own country.

Mr. Michael English (Nottingham, West): What steps have been taken, possibly with North or South American assistance, to overcome the jamming of the BBC service to Argentina?

Secondly, do the right hon. Gentleman's options include the possibility of using article 96 of the United Nations charter? The Prime Minister rejected that on the ground that it would produce only an advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, but surely it is a possible advantage that the Security Council is not necessarily bound by such a judgment.

Mr. Pym: We are doing what we can with overseas broadcasts. There are many other channels in the Southern American hemisphere and we are using every channel that we can and doing everything we can to get our message through by those means.

On the hon. Gentleman's second point, we have not ruled out that option. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister made that clear in our debate just over a week ago.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton (Macclesfield): Is it not clear that, if we go on as we are, we shall be bending over

backwards so far that we shall fall flat on our backs in seeking to achieve a diplomatic settlement? Is not my right hon. Friend aware that the Argentine junta will never agree to a settlement in accordance with United Nations Security Council resolution 502 and that the longer our forces are in the South Atlantic, the greater will be the danger to them? Is it not time that we answered with what has to be done, which is to take the Falkland Islands back by force?

Mr. Pym: It remains to be seen whether the Argentines will fulfil resolution 502. I think that not only the exertion of the various measures that we have taken, but the influence of public opinion in countries all round the world can have an important influence on the Argentines at the present time. It remains to be seen whether they fulfil the resolution, but I assure my hon. Friend that, in the meantime, I intend to stand and to remain upright.

Several Hon. Members *rose*—

Mr. Speaker: Order. We must return to Private Members' business.

Mr. Nigel Spearing (Newham, South): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The House entrusts to your good judgment the time at which questions on statements should be terminated, but may I point out to you that only one non-Privy Councillor on the Labour Benches has been called to ask a question?

Mr. Norman Atkinson (Tottenham): An absolute disgrace.

Mr. Spearing: May I ask you, Mr. Speaker, to bear that point of balance in mind when statements are made in future?

Several Hon. Members *rose*—

Mr. Speaker: Right hon. Members must not be barred from being called merely because they are Privy Councillors.

Sir John Biggs-Davison (Epping Forest): On a distinct and different point of order, Mr. Speaker. I wish to submit to you a consideration for the future handling of statements and discussions in the House on this grave matter.

My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary was asked from the Opposition Front Bench to forgo the option of bombarding Argentina, he was asked from the Liberal Benches about the supply of Harriers, and he was asked by the hon. Member for Nottingham, West (Mr. English) about methods to prevent the jamming of our broadcasts. The answers to those questions could surely be of great value to our adversary.

There are many questions that my right hon. and hon. Friends and I would like to ask, but we have not asked them because of our fear that the answers, or even the putting of the questions, might give comfort to the Argentine bandits. Therefore, I wonder whether you, Mr. Speaker, might wish to consult both sides of the House on whether we should be willing in future to go into secret session if necessary.

Mr. English: Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. As I was mentioned by the hon. Member for Epping Forest (Sir J. Biggs-Davison), may I assure the House that Argentina may take no comfort from me? I fully support my right hon. Friends on the Front Bench.

Mr. Speaker: I keep for the next occasion a list of those Members who are not called.

Mr. Norman Atkinson: Then what has happened in the past four weeks?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Gentleman is not alone in not having been called; others have been trying to be called. I am conscious of the frustration of those who are not called, but we must move on now.

Mr. Atkinson: Disgraceful.