

LOBBY BRIEFING

time: 11 AM date: 10.5.82

PRIME MINISTER'S DAY

The Prime Minister is working at No 10 all day.

At 10.30 she chaired a meeting of the Group of Ministers concerned with the Falkland Islands (Foreign Secretary, Home Secretary, Chancellor of the Duchy, Defence Secretary, CDS and the Attorney General).

At 12.00 noon the Prime Minister will have talks, followed by lunch with the President of the Maldives.

At 4.15 pm this afternoon, the Prime Minister will meet Dr Kissinger who will be giving the FCO Bicentenary Lecture.

STATISTICS

At 3.30 pm publication of Trade figures (February) and Export figures (March).

PUBLICATIONS

CFR at 3.30 pm, the initial Government Observations on the second report from the Education, Science and Arts Committee on "The Secondary School Curriculum and Examination".

IN THE HOUSE

There are no statements.

ANSWERS OF INTEREST

No 61 Written 4.30 pm: Mr Vivian Bendall to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will announce an increase in London Taxi fares. (Answer will announce 10% increase.)

From Friday Written 4.30 pm: Paul Dean to ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he will make a grant towards the cost of the Citizens Rights Office. (Answer will announce a grant for the Child Poverty Action Group.)

WEEKEND ACTIVITIES

The Group of Ministers met with the Prime Minister yesterday at Chequers for about 1½ hours and discussed mainly the diplomatic moves. Today's meeting which began at 10.30 am would discuss both the diplomatic and military positions. On Saturday and Sunday our Ambassador at the UN had two meetings on both days with the UNSG. The Argentine representative had a similar number of meetings. The talks continue in New York today. We referred to the UNSG's statement last night. We had left our paper with the UNSG. As our Ambassador in New York had said, the UNSG might synthesise both points of view. We could not say where he had reached with this process. It was a matter of clarifying the flesh to put on the bone of his procedural proposals.

EC

Mr Tindemans had said that support for the UK had not lessened and yesterday's meeting had confirmed Community solidarity for the diplomatic and economic policies. As expected, no decisions had been taken on renewing sanctions; that was expected on 16 May. The Community was aware that if UNR502 had not been implemented we fully expected the measures to be renewed.

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NEW YORK TALKS

We had no great optimism. But these were the only negotiations in progress and we were aiming to cherish and nurture them. No timetable existed. They were not necessarily long term and we were not going to be shunted into a siding; therefore we were thinking more in days rather than weeks or months, particularly bearing in mind the previous negotiations that had taken place. Nobody expected the Secretary General to go on indefinitely. It was our understanding that neither side had seen the others negotiating position. We had no evidence at this stage to believe the Argentines were prepared to withdraw without us having to use force. The Costa Mendez interview yesterday had not altered our view.

PUBLIC OPINION

The Government's best sounding board was the 300+ MPs who could report on feelings in their constituencies. We were not in the business of public opinion polls but they did show very substantial support. We were not aware of any request for further meetings with the Prime Minister from Dr Owen or Mr Steel.

MEDIA COVERAGE

The Prime Minister had never been particularly unhappy about the coverage. What she said last week reflected other people's views. Certainly she was not happy that our veracity had been directly compared with Argentina's.

We hoped pictures would be available to the media very soon. We understood that the satellite facilities from the Task Force had not worked. As far as we were aware Cabinet had not seen any pictures.

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