

LOBBY BRIEFING

time: 11.00 date: 1.6.82

PRIME MINISTER'S DAY

The Prime Minister will be working at No 10 all day.

At 10.30am she chaired a meeting of the Group of Ministers concerned with the Falklands. (Foreign Sec., Home Sec., Defence Sec., Chancellor of the Duchy, the Attorney General and the CDS). The meeting broke up at 12.15pm.

We informed the lobby that Mr Parkinson was giving an interview to BBC TV lunchtime news.

MILITARY ACTIVITY

We said the PM had expressed no views on the question of the return of bodies from the Falklands for burial. We said whether they would be brought back was under consideration. It is possible that Ministers would make a decision when the conflict was over. In the meantime the major option was temporary burial where they fell and later transfer to Commonwealth War Grave on the Falklands (used for the dead of WW1 and the Battle of the River Plate in WW2).

Decisions on extending the runway at Port Stanley when we have regained the Islands would be made on military and economic considerations.

We said we did not know how many islanders were being held in Port Stanley. If our intelligence sources had identified this we would not wish to talk about it since it would reveal to the Argentines the level of our intelligence. Calling for a safe passage for civilians before a major conflict may be a possibility under certain circumstances. The question of offering an opportunity for surrender is a matter for the military commander on the ground. The UN Sec General is a third party through whom the Argentine junta can communicate and we are content for him to be in play and responding to the requests of the Security Council.

LONG-TERM SOLUTION

The PM and her Ministerial colleagues are always mindful of the long term considerations. The PM in the House last week stated again our position and talked about 4 stages, the last of which is consultations with the Islanders about the future. These would be conducted through their democratic councils and it might not be necessary for a Minister to go out there, though this remains an option. We are not making contingency plans for a long-running war of attrition once the immediate conflict is over. We thought it might take many months to allow the Islanders to settle down to a normal situation. The return of the Governor was under consideration. It was perhaps implicit in the return of the British administration but that sort of matter would be settled after the conflict. We did not think a lengthy period of military governorship was likely.

We thought it was likely that those Islanders who had suffered damage to their homes during the occupation would receive some kind of financial help.

MINISTERIAL ACTIVITY

We thought that today's meeting of OD(SA) would be primarily on military matters, though there would be some discussion of the position with the Security Council.

On the PM's activities we said that she would be in No 10 for the week, had no regional visits, would probably be seeing Ministers every day and would hold Cabinet on Thursday. On Friday she leaves for Versailles.

REVIEW

We said there had been no formal progress on the inquiry into the whole Falkland Islands crisis. We thought the review would get under way immediately the current military actions had ended, but the precise form of the review was still under consideration.