

LOBBY BRIEFING

time: 4.00 date: 14.6.82

The morning lobby was repeated.

UNSSD II

We briefed the lobby on the main elements of the PM's programme (see POB 150). No initiatives should be expected following her meetings with UNSG. We could not brief on her speech as it was still being prepared. This visit was an opportunity to explain our approach to defence and disarmament which was defensive rather than offensive; we would also indicate our desire for arms reduction on a mutual and verifiable basis. It was therefore an important occasion.

STATEMENTS

We could not say whether there would be any statements on Tuesday. There was always a possibility. The PM had no plans at this stage to make a statement on disarmament before going to New York; possibly there might be a statement on her return.

CIVILIAN CASUALTIES

Clearly it was impossible to rule out casualties whilst hostilities continued. We stressed that for weeks we had been trying to get a ICRC presence on the Falklands especially in Port Stanley but this was beyond our control. It was only now that the Argentines had their backs to the sea that they had agreed. It was our objective to minimise all casualties including civilian and military from both sides.

We were surprised to learn that there were up to 600 civilians in Port Stanley. We had also been surprised by the number of Argentine forces in Goose Green. We had been relying on earlier reports from civilians who had left the Falklands who had said that most of the civilian population had left the town for the country.

GALTIERI'S MESSAGE TO THE POPE ("What Gail")

We understood from reports that he had told the Pope that he was ready for a ceasefire on the basis of mutual withdrawal. Our position was that there could be no question of our withdrawal; although earlier, before we had landed on the Islands we were prepared to withdraw, the position had now changed.

ISLAND FORTRESS

We had not heard any Minister use this expression, but the PM had said in her American interviews that we would have to defend the Islands if necessary. Therefore we could not quarrel with it.

RUNWAY EXTENSION

We knew of no plans for British aircraft to use the Port Stanley airfield to bomb the mainland.

MFO

If the Argentines continued hostilities after withdrawal that would create an entirely new situation. Latin American and other countries had a vested interest in the peace and stability of the area and therefore some kind of security guarantee would be of deep and abiding interest to them. We would not quarrel with the stories over the weekend in respect of Argentine prisoners.

AMERICAN SUPPORT

We were not entirely pleased with American diplomacy at the UN but we continued to enjoy their enthusiastic support.

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GVERNOR

The Government was still considering the future of the Governor. He might well return either immediately or later, and for a shorter or longer period of time, with or without plumes. We could not say precisely as no final decision had been taken. The Governor was a colonial symbol which could be offensive to some countries. We did not intend to be gratuitously insulting if that could be avoided.

WORLD CUP

Neither the PM nor Mr Thatcher had commented on Argentine defeat.

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