

Question-and-Answer Session With Reporters on Foreign and Domestic Policy Issues [extract on the Falklands]

April 5, 1982

1.07pm White House

Q. Good morning -- afternoon.

The President. Yes, it's afternoon now.

Situation in the Falkland Islands

Q. Mr. President, would you support -- would this government support Britain's efforts to free its hostages in the Falklands in exchange for Mrs. Thatcher's support for freeing American hostages in Iran?

The President. You've asked a question, in a way, about a particular facet of it. Let me just answer it in a little broader context.

It's a very difficult situation for the United States, because we're friends with both of the countries engaged in this dispute, and we stand ready to do anything we can to help them. And what we hope for and would like to help in doing is have a peaceful resolution of this with no forceful action or no bloodshed. And to that extent, we support the resolution that's already in the United Nations, that there be a withdrawal of forces and we resolve this at the U.N.

Q. Mr. President, British television news. Have you spoken to Prime Minister Thatcher this morning?

The President. No, but we have -- I received a message from her with regard to the appointment of the new Minister -- or Foreign Minister.

Q. What will you do if Britain -- --

Q. What else did she have to tell you?

The President. Well, she appreciated very much our efforts and my attempt to -- --

Q. Is America prepared to offer military assistance if the British ask for it?

The President. Again, as I said, we're friends of both sides in this, and we're going to try, strive for -- and I think that they will be willing to meet in the idea of a peaceful resolution.

Q. Mr. President, are you meeting with the Argentine Foreign Minister, who's here today talking to the Organization of American States?

The President. No, I don't think -- no, there isn't any meeting of that kind on the schedule.

Q. Mr. President, Britain -- the British Government has threatened to use force if diplomacy fails, and it's regarded as a serious threat in Britain. What would your position be, sir, if diplomacy did fail?

The President. Well, you're getting into a hypothetical question that I hope I never am faced with. Both sides have threatened with the use of force, as is evidenced with Argentina's military landing there. And I just don't think that it's an issue that should come to that point.

[material omitted, finally reporters returned to the Falklands issue at the end of the Q&A]

....

Situation in the Falkland Islands

Q. Just a last question, sir? Have you accepted the role as honest broker in the Falkland Islands dispute, sir?

The President. If we can be of help in doing that, yes, anything that would bring a peaceful solution to what seems to be an unnecessary disagreement.

Q. The British want to go to war. [Laughter]

Mr. Gergen. [David R. Gergen, Assistant to the President for Communications] Thank you very much, Mr. President.

Mr. Speakes. We start on time; we quit on time.

The President. Yeah, because, heaven sakes, yes, I'm due over at the Hilton Hotel -- --

Q. [Inaudible] -- seat, I mean, we're late. [Laughter]

The President. You know, I was speaking to that group last year. I've got to speak again.

Q. Do you have any fear and trepidation about going back?

The President. No, but I'm wearing my oldest suit today. [Laughter]

Mr. Gergen. Thank you very much. Lights.

The President. You know, these are going to do one thing, if you'll all remember it. I leave every press conference, as I told you before, with a great feeling of guilt about the

unrecognized hands that have been up and haven't been called on. So, maybe with doing this weekly we can rotate a little.

Q. But now, what's going to happen if somebody asks you a question in a photo opportunity? Are you going to open a trap door?

The President. Oh, incidentally, that's one -- that's a part of the new rules. There will absolutely be no questions -- --

Q. No, sir -- --

The President. -- -- in the photo opportunity.

Q. The rules given us said no answers from you. [Laughter] You will not answer. They carefully and, I think, wisely did not say there would be no questions.

Q. We can still ask questions; it's just that you may or may not answer.

Q. That's correct.

The President. Okay, you can. But I can sit there with a bar of soap, a pan of water in my hand ready to wash anyone's mouth out with soap. [Laughter]

Q. How frequently do you want to meet with us in this fashion, sir?

Q. Every day. [Laughter]

Reporters. Thank you.

Note: The question-and-answer session began at 1:07 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

<https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/archives/speech/question-and-answer-session-reporters-foreign-and-domestic-policy-issues>