

Private Secretary

FALKLAND ISLANDS : SECRETARY OF STATE'S SPEECH IN THE  
HOUSE OF COMMONS ON 7 APRIL

1. I submit a draft speech, which in its present shape would take about 18 minutes to deliver. I hope that it conforms to the Secretary of State's remarks at his meeting first thing this morning.

2. The draft takes account of comments from some departments on an earlier version. If further comments are received I shall let you know immediately.

*R. Mallaby*

6 April 1982

C L G Mallaby  
Planning Staff

cc : PS/Mr Hurd  
PS/PUS  
Sir A Acland  
Mr Bullard  
Sir I Sincalir  
Mr Wright  
Mr Giffard  
Lord Bridges

Mr Ure  
Lord N Gordon Lennox  
Mr Fearn Emergency Unit  
ERD  
UND  
ECD(E)  
Mr Bowen DS 11 MOD



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- Head of DS11

File No.  
15

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AUS(D Staff)  
ACDS(Ops)

I enclose a draft of the opening speech submitted by FCO officials to the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary for tomorrow's debate.

2. Could we have comments by 1930 tonight.

*Stephen*

6th April 1982

(D T PIPER)  
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HOUSE OF COMMONS DEBATE ON FALKLAND ISLANDS, WEDNESDAY  
7 APRIL

SECRET.....

SPEECH BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE

Introduction

1. I speak less than two days after becoming ~~Secretary~~ <sup>Secretary</sup> of ~~State~~ for Foreign and Commonwealth ~~Affairs~~. I am deeply conscious of the heavy responsibilities that have ~~suddenly~~ been placed upon me. I shall do my best to discharge them. <sup>Making full use of</sup> My predecessor, ~~with all his talent and his charm,~~ <sup>his great gifts of</sup> ~~with all his~~ <sup>special</sup> determination and ~~his strong sense~~ <sup>flair</sup> of honour, lifted high the reputation of British foreign policy. <sup>He registered some important achievements.</sup> He was a very fine Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary. We have now encountered a serious difficulty. My purpose is to overcome that difficulty and to restore to British foreign policy the high respect at home and abroad which it had enjoyed since the present government took office ~~and while Lord Carrington was in charge.~~

asures—flag(s).....

2. I shall approach this task in a spirit of realism, calm and determination. I have chosen these words with particular care. I have chosen realism, because I shall

proceed/



proceed in full recognition of the major difficulties that face us in the crisis about the Falkland Islands. I have chosen calm, because it will help me to give careful consideration to the practical options and to reach the right decisions as we progress towards our objectives in this crisis. I have chosen determination, because I intend to show Argentina and indeed the whole world that Britain means to succeed in this affair.

3. The House is aware of our objectives. They were stated by my right honourable Friend the Prime Minister on Saturday. We intend to see that the Falkland Islands are freed from occupation and returned to British administration at the earliest possible moment.

#### Recent Developments

4. This debate gives me a welcome opportunity to inform the House of the most recent developments. I shall also explain the measures that we are taking in our efforts to liberate the islands.

5. Since the debate on Saturday there have been a number of developments of which the House will probably be aware. That same day the Argentines extended their control to the island of South Georgia, a dependency of the Falklands. The small detachment of Royal Marines in South Georgia put up a gallant and spirited resistance. But of course they could not stand up against overwhelming strength and have been taken prisoner. The Argentines have also been consolidating their presence in the Falkland Islands themselves. We believe that they may now have an occupation force of some 5,000 men in place. While we have no reports so far of direct maltreatment of the islanders, it is quite obvious that the occupation force has no intention of treating them other than as a



conquered population. Tight restrictions have been placed on their activities. Any sign of resistance, even symbolic, is likely to be treated severely.

6. The Governor of the Falkland Islands and the marines from Port Stanley have been evacuated to this country. I am sure that the whole House will wish to join me in tribute to them. The Governor, Mr Rex Hunt, conducted himself with courage and dignity amid the danger and confusion. He proved himself worthy of the trust which the British Government had placed in him and of the manifest affection which he had inspired among the islanders. The Royal Marines did all that could possibly have been expected of them. They gave the invaders a sharp taste of what even a small detachment from the British armed services can do when faced with naked aggression.

7. The British Ambassador and most of his staff are being withdrawn from Buenos Aires. A small British Interests Section will continue to work in the Swiss Embassy there. We have advised the many British subjects living in Argentina to depart unless they have special reasons for remaining.

### Argentina's Aggression

8. My first impression on assuming responsibility for this crisis at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office is <sup>of</sup> that ~~the people of Britain, and perhaps this House itself, may not be fully aware of the appalling~~ <sup>nature of the international</sup> crime that ~~that~~ <sup>the</sup> Argentine regime has committed. As recently as the end of February, as the House is aware, we had held talks with Argentina about the Falkland Islands. Those talks had been cordial. The Argentine Government must have been



fully aware of Britain's willingness to deal with the Falkland Islands problem by means of fair negotiation. Why did they suddenly decide in the last days of March to resort to brutal aggression? I suggest that part of the answer lies in the very brutality and ~~incompetence~~ <sup>unpopularity</sup> of the Argentine regime itself. Inflation is raging in Argentina, at the rate of 140% a year. The regime is notorious for its systematic contempt of all human rights. There have been thousands of arrests and killings, often described in a tragic euphemism as 'disappearances'. Only a few days before the invasion of the Falkland Islands there had been riots in Buenos Aires and many people had been arrested. Harrassed by political unrest at home, <sup>and</sup> beset by mounting economic difficulties, the regime turned desperately to a ~~single~~ <sup>typical</sup> attempt to arouse jingoism among the people. ~~The sordid victimisation of the Falkland Islanders cannot be allowed to pass.~~ The Falkland Islanders have <sup>thus</sup> become the victims of sordid opportunism. The purpose of <sup>his</sup> ~~the~~ government is to restore their rights.

#### Current Actions

9. The House is aware that we have despatched a large task force towards the South Atlantic; we are confident that it will be [fully] adequate for any action that may be required [of it]. <sup>Task force</sup> This is an essential part of our policy: it gives us the strength from which to pursue a settlement, for it is only strength that the regime in Argentina seems likely to understand. But the task force will not reach the area for about two weeks. That gives us time to do everything possible to solve the problem without further fighting. We would much prefer a negotiated settlement and will do all we can to get one. If our efforts fail, the <sup>Argentine regime</sup> ~~world~~ will know what to expect: Britain does not appease dictators.



10. So the need now is for all the world to bring maximum pressure on Argentina to withdraw its armed forces from the Falkland Islands. <sup>Let me</sup> ~~You may~~ describe our policies in this regard. Britain herself has already taken various measures. We have broken diplomatic relations with Argentina. We have frozen Argentine assets in this country. We have stopped official credits for exports to Argentina. We have banned the export of arms to Argentina. And we have decided to impose an embargo on the import of all goods from Argentina not already shipped by the time of the invasion.

11. Argentina, as I have said, is economically weak. The measures we have taken, combined with the <sup>despatch</sup> ~~approach~~ of our naval force, are a powerful and persuasive combination. <sup>Yet, if we are to</sup> ~~But the prospects for convincing~~ Argentina that aggression does not pay, <sup>we shall also need</sup> ~~will depend significantly~~ on the support ~~we~~ <sup>of</sup> ~~receive~~ from the world community.

11. The government <sup>was</sup> ~~were~~ heartened by the promptness and the clarity with which the Security Council of the United Nations - one day after the invasion - endorsed the Resolution we put forward. It demands an immediate cessation of hostilities and an immediate withdrawal of all Argentine <sup>don't say / unless</sup> ~~forces~~ and it calls on the governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom to seek a diplomatic solution to their differences and to respect the United Nations Charter. Britain immediately accepted the injunction to seek a diplomatic solution and observe the Charter. But Argentina coldly displayed its contempt for world opinion by rejecting the Resolution. This Resolution is mandatory. It represents the expression of world opinion. I hope that the Argentine regime will reconsider its intemperate reaction.



The whole world has an interest in the implementation of this Resolution. There are many territories across the world which are vulnerable to aggression from more powerful neighbours. The preservation of peace depends on the exercise of responsibility and restraint. It depends on the strong not taking the law into their own hands and imposing their rule on the weak. It depends on the international community supporting the principle of self-determination and punishing those who wilfully and forcibly violate that principle. It is the Falkland Islanders who today are being deprived of their right to live in accordance with their wishes. If the world does not oblige Argentina to restore their rights, tomorrow it will be someone else's turn to suffer aggression and Occupation. The world will become an even more dangerous place.

13. The government have been making these views known to a large number of friendly countries. We have <sup>urged</sup> ~~suggested that~~ ~~it would be appropriate for them to take certain measures to demonstrate their views to~~ Argentina. Such measures might include the recall of Ambassadors for consultation, an embargo on the supply of arms and military equipment, a denial of export credits and instructions to commercial banks to exercise prudence and refrain from making new loans to Argentina. We have also had many other contacts with our friends. For example, the High Commissioners in London of the Commonwealth countries visited the Foreign and Commonwealth Office for a meeting yesterday afternoon. The initial <sup>various</sup> response to our approaches has been helpful. I should like in particular to mention that New Zealand has severed diplomatic relations with Argentina and Australia and Canada have withdrawn their Ambassadors.



14. Yesterday, my right honourable Friend the Prime Minister sent important messages to our partners in the European Community and to other very friendly countries. She has notified these countries about <sup>reli</sup> the economic measures which Britain has taken and requested them to take similar action.

15. We count on the support of our friends. With it, we hope <sup>to convince</sup> that Argentina ~~will see~~ that withdrawal and a negotiated settlement <sup>is</sup> ~~are~~ the only possible approach in the Falkland Islands dispute and the only one which is in Argentina's own interests.

#### Conclusion

16. It is intolerable that the peaceful people of the Falkland Islands, who are British by choice, by nationality and by inheritance, should be the victims of unprovoked invasion by ~~a~~ <sup>powerful and</sup> covetous neighbour. It will ~~not~~ <sup>be far from</sup> easy for the <sup>we</sup> government to reverse ~~this~~ situation. We recognise the difficulties, ~~but~~ we shall spare no effort to reach a peaceful solution. The Falkland Islanders have responded <sup>to the crisis</sup> with courage and dignity ~~to the rape of their~~ <sup>and</sup> Islands. I want to assure them now that Britain will stand by its commitments. Their confidence in us is not misplaced. We shall do all in our power to re-establish the British administration that they have always wanted. They shall not regret the determination with which they clung to their links with Britain <sup>to</sup> and British heritage.

17. If we in this country are to achieve our objectives as swiftly and as peacefully as possible, then we must unite in our pursuit of them. Of course there has been criticism of the government's treatment of the subject before the crisis. In a democracy it is inevitably <sup>and</sup> indeed right

/that



at this should happen. But we have now set a determined course to solve the problem and we shall not be deflected. When it is a question of restoring the rights of our fellow Islanders 8,000 miles away there can be no doubt where our duty lies. Let us all in this country join together to ensure that Argentina's intolerable defiance of all the rules of international behaviour is not allowed to stand. I appeal also to the international community to support this country in bringing all possible pressure on Argentina to withdraw from the Islands and make a peaceful outcome possible.

thing this morning.

2. The draft takes account of comments from some departments on an earlier version. If further comments are received I shall let you know immediately.

*R. M. Kelly*

8 April 1982

G. L. G. Mallaby  
Planning Staff

cc : PS/Mr Hard  
PS/PUS  
Sir A. McLeod  
Mr Ballard  
Sir I. Sinclair  
Mr Wright  
Mr Clifford  
Lord Bridges

Mr Dye  
Lord N. Gordon-Lennox  
Mr Peart, Emergency Unit  
END  
WGB  
BCD(T)  
Mr Dixon, DG of MOP