

Private Secretary

FALKLAND ISLANDS: PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING AT 1430 ON 11 APRIL

1. At the Prime Minister's meeting this afternoon I recommend that the Secretary of States should take the following line:

- a. We have now had a message from Mr Haig who will be arriving in London at 0630 tomorrow. This talks of 'additional ideas' from his discussions in Buenos Aires and refers to a 'draft proposal'. Mr Haig says that he is sure that the Prime Minister would agree that any military confrontation must be avoided until we have been able to consider the draft proposal.
- b. We have been taking the line that if military confrontation is to be avoided it is up to the Argentines to remove their naval vessels and auxiliaries from the zone.
- c. But, in the circumstances, it is unthinkable that we should go ahead and sink Argentine vessels as from 0400 GMT tomorrow.

The Arguments

- 2. The chief argument against proceeding as at present planned (see paragraph 3 on the background below) are:
 - a. To ignore the appeal in Mr Haig's message not to engage in military operations in present circumstances would be a major rebuff. This could have seriously damaging implications for our future relations with the US Administration.
 - b. The effort and prestige which Mr Haig has personally engaged in his effort to bring about a diplomatic solution would be frustrated. Not only would this be a major set-back for Mr Haig himself but it would probably mean that any Argentine moves towards acceptance of British objectives and the implementation of the Security Council Resolution 502 would be stopped.
 - c. If a sinking took place when it is widely known that a peace effort is underway, we would certainly lose much of the support we have enjoyed so far from the allies in the Community, the Commonwealth and in other Third World states. Argentina would certainly bring the issue

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back to the United Nations where we could expect to be virtually isolated and probably obliged to use our veto. This could therefore at a stroke unravel the remarkable practical support we have had, for example in the Community over Argentine imports.

Background

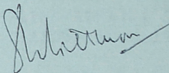
3. As the Secretary of State will recall the position on the instructions to the submarine now approaching the zone of exclusion around the Falkland Islands is as follows:

a. Before midnight last night orders were sent placing the submarine on Rule of Engagement Number 2. Under this rule the submarine operates on patrol and will fire merely in self-defence if attacked.

b. Unless Ministers decide otherwise a submarine will be given instructions at 1600 GMT today ordering it to return to operations under rules 4,10 and 13 (ie it will attack any Argentine naval vessels or naval auxiliaries found in the zone of exclusion from 0400 hours GMT on 12 April).

Thus, if the submarine is not to attack Argentine vessels at 0400 tomorrow morning, the procedure agreed yesterday will have to be changed. ~~Instructions will have to be sent to the submarine before 1600Z today ordering it to remain under Rule 2.~~ This is our objective in the circumstances of the Haig message.

4. A draft message from the Prime Minister to Mr Haig is attached.



11 April 1982

D H GILLMORE

cc:

Falkland Islands Emergency Staff