

Parliament

Commons:

Questions:

Business:

Lords:

Prime Minister, Northern Ireland.

Committee Stage of the Northern Ireland Bill.

Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill:
Third Reading.

Local Government & Planning (S) Bill: Second Reading.

Industry Bill (Money Bill): Second Reading and
Remaining Stages.

ROYAL ASSENT.

Ministers - see Annex

PRESS DIGEST

FALKLANDS

Treatment:

D/Star: Maggie issues order: Advance - we fight back; Queen's prayer for those in South Atlantic.

Sun: Our darkest hour - 27 die as jets blitz 2 ships.

Mirror: The pain and the sorrow - 20 are killed on Coventry; 4 on Atlantic Conveyor; Death toll 100 with 120 injured; Queen's prayer.

Express: Feature: Queen's prayer alongside main headline: Goose Green is taken.

Mail: Hearts of Oak - reference to courage and resolve of captains of Coventry and Atlantic Conveyor typifying spirit of Task Force.

Telegraph: Troops are poised to attack; MPs expect good news to follow loss of 2 ships; you say our resolve is not weakened.

Guardian: 24 are killed as Argentine jets inflict double blow on Fleet. Harriers moved before Exocet missiles hit ship: Navy able to absorb losses.

Times: Land battle soon. Nott tells MPs; attack on mainland ruled out.

FT: 24 killed in attacks on destroyer and merchant vessel; Royal Navy pays heavy price; UN stops short of ceasefire; Ministers attempt to reassure MPs.

Comment:

D/Star: Under heading "War - and no half measures" says loss of 2 more ships makes people more determined to see speedy end to conflict. But we cannot allow our ships to go on being picked off by suicide pilots and Exocet. What other country would sit back and allow lives to be lost because enemy planes free to come and go as they please? We must not rule out any action to win.

Sun: Cost of defending freedom is never small when adversaries are tyrants who hold life cheap. Intolerable if our men exposed to greater hazards than necessary. Our domestic fellow travellers bleat that we should go easy on Argentinians this cringing stance. Should be one resolve in minds of Government and commanders - finish job speedily as possible and bomb Argentine bases if necessary.

Mirror: Casualty list grows - Sheffield, Ardent, Antelope, Coventry, Atlantic Conveyor; 70 men died in them. Argentine losses much greater. But for big power suppliers of arms to Argentina the crisis would never have happened. But how can we complain in view of Canberra bomber sales to them?

Express: Under heading "We shall not flinch" says wars cannot be fought without casualties. We can now see clearly there was never any chance of getting Argentinians peacefully off the Islands. Country at arms is resolute.

Mail: Grief is in order. Anxiety is natural. In these dark moments we must take our comfort where and how we can. Sombre and determined. You speak for Britain. But we will cheer when the Union Jack is raised over Port Stanley. And it will be raised.

Telegraph: Under heading "Cause for Anger" says in our fascination we must not forget our anger at stupidity and criminality of junta. Over weeks it has become clear we are dealing with a leadership, even a people, in the grip of a delusion, believing utterly in their claim to the Malvinas. No possibility of a serious discussion with people who lie and have infinite capacity for self deception.

Guardian: In a long leader concludes there must be a moment soon, perhaps in the shock of loss, perhaps on a tide of optimism, when our politicians abandon the blankness of the days since re-invasion and begin to lead again towards a political settlement.

Times: Says society unprepared after a generation of peace has met the shock with quiet resolution. Paramount to inform the public what is happening on its behalf; second, to be a specific about announcements as soon as possible.

Two main items dominate news:

- Mr Nott's remarks to Tory MPs which are interpreted to mean there will soon be a decisive battle for Port Stanley.
- criticism of MoD's handling of announcements about stricken ships and worries caused to relatives.

Military:

- Many features of loss of Coventry and Atlantic Conveyor and their captains and crews; Broadsword also hit along with two RFAs which are now on station.
- Goose Green reported taken by SAS.
- Argentine claims sinking of Atlantic Conveyor their biggest success yet; junta more defiant and confident yesterday.
- Super Etendard had intended Exocet for Invincible; junta scouring world for more Exocets and fears that Libya supplied missiles in ships which slipped into BA last week.
- Sun says 3 of 4 Exocets so far fired have struck home.

- Begin denied that a jet detained by Customs men in New York carrying bombs, rockets and other arms is destined for Argentina.
- Loss of ships has not altered USA view that we shall claim early victory in Falklands.
- Sun says Mr Nott rocked House by saying it was not possible to bomb Argentine bases; says we don't know precisely where their "2½ submarines are.
- Helicopter crew which landed in Chile on their way home say they were on routine patrol.

Welfare:

- Dick Francis, BBC, strongly criticises ^{MoD,} ~~BBC's~~ handling of bad news; says it has not been thought through; and criticises Ian McDonald too.
- Editor of D/Star, criticising delay in revealing ships lost causing needless anxiety to families, says fierce competition between Fleet Street newspapers is put aside in crisis; Minister has only to ask for editors' help.
- "We have told MoD many times we need more co-operation and trust between Fleet Street and MoD. It is time he learned to trust us".
- Reports that telephone lines to bases were jammed for 6 hours.
- Big response to South Atlantic appeal fund.

Economic:

- Deputy Governor of Bank says financial sanctions imposed by UK have been wholly effective.

Diplomacy:

- UNSG has another go but without much hope - asks what he can achieve in 7 days.
- Costa Mendez says USA will get very negative image in Latin America if it supplies arms to Britain.

Union:

- Jim Sauter, NUSeamen, says loss of Atlantic Conveyor will not alter union's support for task force; many thousands of seamen ready to go.

Pope:

- To visit Argentine June 10.

Politics:

- ~~Government~~ ^{Pool} wins backing of Labour Party NEC for handling of crisis in spite of Benn criticism.

Personal:

- Plenty of coverage of your speech, your warning to expect further losses and your call to stand fast and be resolute.

B. INGHAM
27 May 1982