

PRIME MINISTER from Bernard Ingham

8/5
c.c. Mr. Ingham
Mr. Pattison

Press Summary: Saturday, 8 May 1982

Falklands

Main Stories:

Britain greatly extends "war zone"; warns Argentine to keep planes and ships within 12 miles of land; this greatly increases British flexibility.

Argentine says it is an act of aggression, and protests to the UN which is the main diplomatic focus for this weekend; Argentine effectively closes its borders to Britons.

Mr. Pym warns that we shall do what is necessary to end Argentine illegal occupation - our resolve is undiminished.

Your patience said to be running out - only a few days before we invade if the Argentines do not agree to withdraw; Reagan does not want fighting to break out again.

Queen sends message to islanders via Governor.

Meanwhile, war breaks out between the Sun and the Mirror over the Sun's allegation that the Mirror, among others, has been behaving like a traitor.

Military

More planes on their way to the task force - Harriers equipped with Sidewinders and Nimrods; Seawolf missile also on the way.

US agrees to provide aerial tankers.

US defence officials doubt whether the Argentines have more than 4 Exocets; the Argentines are trying to buy missiles wherever they can.

/ Guardian

Guardian says US intelligence is complaining we are not letting them have enough information early enough, and we suspect the CIA have been putting out dis-information to put pressure on us.

International

US says 32 fighter engines being shipped to the Argentine through San Francisco.

NATO continues to support us, and Schmidt and Spadolini do so too, while calling for a ceasefire.

We have asked the USA to increase pressure by imposing trade sanctions, but it is unlikely that they will do so, though Ambassador Henderson says they are being very forthcoming with material assistance.

EC

Chandernagor gives a warning that EC support will cost us something on the Mandate; Irish expected to try this weekend to get rid of sanctions.

In the Argentine

Well over 400 death toll acknowledged; Telegraph puts it at 470.

In the Falklands

Pictures of smoking Port Stanley and cratered runway after bombing raid released by US new agency.

In the UK

Enoch Powell urges the Government to stop talking and start fighting, and says two separate battles are going on - one in the South Atlantic and the other between the FCO and the rest of us.

Scargill accuses the Government of madness, and using the troops as cannon fodder - Britain has no right to sovereignty over the islands; Tories generating jingoism aided by the capitalist press.

Admiral Hill-Norton forecasts we shall lose more ships.

Media

Sun in trouble for its traitorous allegation from Michael English MP, the NUJ and the TV programme "What the Papers Say" which accuses the popular press of irresponsible reporting.

Sun leader defends itself against attacks, and says it won't be gagged.

Mirror says the Sun, a coarse and demented newspaper, has accused it and others of being a traitor to Britain when what it means is a refusal to twist, distort and mangle the truth about the fighting; it says the Sun is the harlot of Fleet Street; to journalism what Gobbels was to truth; the Sun should carry an official Government announcement - "Reading this newspaper may damage your mind"; Mirror also points out that Ferdy Mount calls for a ceasefire in this week's Spectator.

George Howard says the BBC is not and cannot be neutral as between Britain and an aggressor; the problem is how to present Argentine information when the BBC can work in the aggressor country.

Peter Snow, of "Newsnight", in a letter to the Times says that much as journalists deeply feel the loss of life, their job is to report and analyse dispassionately and to examine the accuracy of reports and constantly to question those in power.

Mail says MOD is positively stingy about information, and is far too slow about sending pictures back from the South Atlantic; Whitehall seems to see its duty as being like that of a prisoner of war: to divulge only name, rank and number: we are giving an enormous and unnecessary advantage to the Argentine in the propaganda war.

Other Comment

Daily Star: Argentine can no longer be in any doubt about our determination; the sinking of the Sheffield has strengthened our resolve; the UN must be just as iron-willed in trying to make the junta accept 502.

/ Express:

Express: Britain has no choice but to tighten the screw; we cannot stand by and do nothing because it is Argentine and not us who occupies the Falklands; if the Argentine does not concede, we must step up military action.

Guardian: we seem to have two options - blockade or military escalation; the extension of the exclusion zone increases the feeling that the Cabinet is going to try to batter the Argentines to the conference table.

Times: the military option still remains the most likely eventuality; but in doing all we can to remove the Argentines from British territory, we must not and need not seek a wider war - i.e., bombing Argentine bases which would bring political opprobrium.

FT: continuing to sell the idea of UN trusteeship, says the immediate priorities are to restrain military activity, preferably confined to the total exclusion zone; meanwhile, seeking to maximise international support, and making clear that we are not demanding a return to the status quo ante.

Other News

Rail

McCarthy recommends flexible rostering, but widespread doubts about the effect of the report in view of all safeguards; Buckton says it is unworkable; Express says the report satisfies no one and now it is up to Peter Parker and colleagues to set about running the rail road; Telegraph says McCarthy could have done worse, but it is difficult to say much good about his report which classically has failed to please anybody - we are now back to where we were; Guardian says this time McCarthy seems to be sending a clear message to ASLEF that they would be unreasonable if they continued to obstruct progress towards a rather more viable future.

/ Election

Election

Tories seen to have achieved major victory in the local elections - much better than they dared to hope; Liberals did well and SDP badly; Labour lost control of Lambeth; Sun says you have been given an enormous boost - Labour paying the price for flabbiness and disunity and total remoteness from public feeling; Express calls it a great triumph, and the first substantial reverse for the SDP - if you succeed in the Falklands, the political rewards will be great; Mail says you are now set for two by-election victories; Guardian says the results indicate a loss of SDP momentum which had begun before the Falklands were invaded.

Unions/Pay

NALGO votes 8 to 1 against affiliating to the Labour Party.

Hospitals will be hit by industrial action from midnight tomorrow with NUPE, NALGO and COHSE involved.

TGWU will not pay the fines of officials ordered to jail under the Employment Bill, but will keep them on full pay.

Economy

Sterling up to \$1.8345 in New York.

Regan forecasts a big fall in US interest rates this year and a lower dollar exchange rate.

German inflation falls again to 5%.

US and Canadian unemployment at record post-war levels of 9.4 and 9.6% respectively.

Defence

General, 52, decides to quit because of defence cuts - nothing to do with the Falklands.

People

Douglas Hurd marries.

8 May, 1982.