

CONFIDENTIAL

MEETING OF INFORMATION GROUP ON THE FALKLANDS

10 AM THURSDAY 13 MAY 1982

Present:

B Ingham - No 10
P Brazier - COI
N Fenn - FCO
J Gee - MoD
D Colvin - Cabinet Office
R Hatfield - Presentation Unit
S Fuller - Presentation Unit
B Mower - No 10.

Military

MoD mentioned a further event in connection with the attack of the three Sky Hawks which was unreported and which we wanted to keep that way. There was no indication at present of any further military happenings today.

It now seemed that the Argentines would be first to put out stories about their returning prisoners and their version of the South Georgia incidents. UK film is definitely expected back today.

There was a short discussion on the transmission of information from the fleet. MoD confirmed that there were no means of radioing film back from the fleet: it had to be shuttled to Ascension on an ad hoc basis. We should continue to get film from now on but still intermittently. This was on the same basis as the letters, none of which had so far come back to the UK. Radio voice-to-voice talks depended on transmissions via auxiliary ships in the fleet and their use was dependent on the operational needs of the fleet. The Navy had been asked to try to give time each day.

Diplomatic

We were at present likely to be attacked from both sides in respect of our either "selling out" or not showing enough flexibility to enable the negotiations to succeed. On the latter point, Parsons had asked for further instructions to avoid the UK's being placed in the position of responsibility for breakdown of the talks. However our position had been helped by a number of statements yesterday reconfirming Argentina's position on pre-judgement of the sovereignty issue. In particular Costa Mendez in briefing the Press after a Cabinet meeting said that all negotiations must lead to recognition of Argentine sovereignty over the Malvinas.

Mr Pym's speech today will give a straightforward exposition of our known position and in connection with the New York talks say that we are in the thick of negotiations, it is impossible to see the outcome, the Argentines are being very difficult. He will repeat the "two anchors" of Britain's negotiating position.

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The UK overnight position was set out in Parsons telegram No 736 which said that we were still very much in business but it was too soon to see a clear pattern or predict an outcome. There was much ground still to be covered. We would not disagree with the Secretary General's estimate that this may take at least two to three more days if we remain on track.

In dealing with the accusation of "sell out", it was important to scotch the notion that we were delaying action because of negotiations. Suggestions of an underhand truce were nonsense. When we are militarily ready, if negotiations clearly are not succeeding, we shall do what is necessary. It is also absurd to try to look at individual parts of any agreement. Any eventual proposals will have to be considered by Ministers as a complete package.

Ministers had now decided to hold Colonel Astiz on Ascension instead of sending him back with the other prisoners. We have had representations from Sweden and France. He is being held there pending further consideration of the legal position. The FCO said they are preparing a line on what he has been accused of doing.

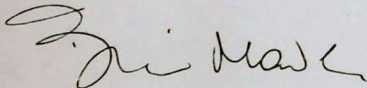
There appeared to be no further developments on the Government's attitude towards the World Cup. We could only say that the matter was being kept under review.

The FCO confirmed that we had received a report from the Swiss about the three British journalists. They are being looked after reasonably well but cannot be moved from their present position and the verdict is not expected for several months.

The Chairman reported to the Group on his useful discussions with the Chancellor of the Duchy.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Group will be held at 10 am on Friday 14 May 1982.



BRIAN MOWER
13 May 1982