

MR. PYM'S STATEMENT ON THE FALKLANDS

Mr. Pym followed the text which you saw beforehand. His mission to Washington attracted good wishes from many speakers. The general tone was low key but serious, with the Opposition pressing harder for thought to be given to further UN involvement.

Denis Healey went out of his way to praise Mr. Haig's "intellectual, plausible and moral stamina" - no doubt hoping that this would help him to get an appointment during his forthcoming US visit. He sought assurances about the right to settlement here for any islander; suggested that Mr. Pym was giving less prominence than you to the wishes of the islanders; and pressed hard on the possibility of a UN interim administrator. He also returned to the final point in closing remarks. David Steel said that there might be a long term role for the UN, but it would be right to concentrate on the Haig effort now. Julian Amery floated ideas for a wide-ranging South Atlantic community, established to develop the Antarctic continent. This might provide a plausible fig-leaf for Argentine withdrawal. Enoch Powell sought - and received - confirmation that it was still our intention to restore British administration of the Islands. Judith Hart wanted priority to be given to peace as the fleet moved on. Mr. Pym stressed that we had done nothing other than give priority to peace. David Owen said that Mr. Pym should tell the Americans that, if Argentina did not respond to British proposals, then a time must come when we must expect the US to impose economic sanctions. He accepted that, if peaceful approaches failed, there would be a time to try other means.

Nicholas Winterton asked how there could be talk of interim arrangements. As soon as the Argentines evacuated, we would administrate. Ioan Evans asked Mr. Pym to go to the United Nations as well as to see Mr. Haig, and George Foulkes suggested that it was time to meet the Argentine Foreign Secretary face to face, perhaps under US auspices. Patrick Cormack said we could be patient, but we could not tolerate armed or active Argentinian presence. The sovereignty issue should be referred to the ICJ. Mr. Pym said that we had no doubts about sovereignty.

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If others had doubts, they should challenge our position. The Labour Government had put the question on the table at the ICJ, but Argentina had refused to acknowledge jurisdiction.

David Stoddart wanted Mr. Haig warned that Fascist success in the Falklands would encourage Fascists everywhere, like those now making themselves heard in Spain. Mr. Pym replied that he had no doubt the US administration was as aware of the principles at stake as we were. Alan Clark stressed that our rights to South Georgia and to the mineral wealth of Antarctica were in no way determined on the sovereignty of the Falkland Islands. Andrew Faulds was a lone and unpopular voice arguing that sovereignty would inevitably be transferred at some stage, so that unnecessary confrontation could be avoided by an interim administration under three flags. Winston Churchill stressed the basic issues at stake. A harmless question from Dick Douglas, asking Mr. Pym to see President Reagan as well as Mr. Haig in the search for peace, led Mr. Pym to give a response which included his unfortunate statement that we would continue to exclude military action as long as the negotiations were in play. This was not picked up at the time, and Denis Healey followed with his concluding question.

MAP

21 April, 1982