



10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

10 May 1982

Dear Professor Ryle.

Thank you for your further letter of 23 April.

I cannot agree with you that the illegal occupation of the Falkland Islands is a relatively minor event. There is a principle at stake which we must stand up for. Nor can I accept that it is inappropriate to back up our continuing and sincere search for a diplomatic settlement to the Falkland Islands crisis with military force. Argentina has so far shown no willingness to comply with United Nations Resolution 502 and we have every intention of applying military pressure on Argentina to withdraw her forces from the Falklands.

Economic sanctions, of course, have their place - we very much welcome the support we have received from our friends, the United States, European Community partners, Commonwealth countries, and Japan - but I doubt very much whether they would be effective on their own. The military actions we are taking must be placed in the context of the range of measures, diplomatic and economic, which we are taking against Argentina. It should never be forgotten that they are being undertaken in pursuance of our right of self-defence under Article 51 of the United Nations Charter.

As to the loss of life which military action can bring, we have, from the outset, been very conscious that an operation on this scale and of this nature inevitably carries with it grave risks.

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The recent, tragic losses have only confirmed this. The Argentine forces pose a variety of threats - aerial, surface and submarine - and we have not underestimated the devastating effect that modern guided weapons can have. But we have confidence in the capabilities of the Task Force and in its ability to undertake a wide range of military operations.

Meanwhile, we remain committed to the search for a negotiated solution. But our judgement is that this search will not bear fruit without the application of military as well as economic pressure on Argentina.

Yours sincerely
Raymond S. Stetson

Professor Sir Martin Ryle, FRS