

LOBBY BRIEFING

time: 11 AM date: 5.4.82

HOME MINISTER'S DAY

The Prime Minister is working in No 10 most of the day.

Late this morning, probably 12.30, she will see the Falkland Islands Governor and the two Royal Marines Officers who flew into RAF Brize Norton this morning. At 3.30 pm the three will give a Press Conference at the FCO.

LORD BUTLER

At 2.30 pm the Prime Minister will attend the Memorial Service for Lord Butler in Westminster Abbey.

INTERVIEWS

At 4.30 pm the Prime Minister will give an interview to Glyn Mathias of ITN at No 10. This is a long standing arrangement, but in view of the situation it has been decided to give the BBC a brief interview also.

PRESS NOTICE

Appointment of Lieutenant-Colonel Arthur James Jardine-Paterson as Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant, Dumfries and Galloway Region (Districts of Nithsdale and of Annandale and Eskdale).

IN THE HOUSE

STATEMENT

At 3.30 pm Mr Prior will make a Statement about his Northern Ireland devolution plans. The White Paper will be published at 2.00 pm. CFRs should be available this morning. Mr Prior will give a Press Conference at 4.00 pm.

There is also the possibility of a Statement following the EC Agriculture Council meeting, and possibly a Business Statement.

ANSWERS OF INTEREST

No 145 Written 3.30pm: Mr Ivan Lawrence to ask S/S Education if he will now publish the report of HM Inspectorate about the effect of local government expenditure policies on the education services in England. (Answer will herald publication at 3.30 pm).

FALKLANDS

Invincible sailed at 10 am; other ships of the task force leaving at different times.

The Prime Minister would be keeping in touch with colleagues throughout the day. This would mainly be by telephone. There were no plans for meetings of Ministers at this stage but there was a long standing arrangement for Cabinet to meet tomorrow.

Asked about possible resignations we said that we could not be responsible for what friends of Ministers might be saying. It had been and still was the Prime Minister's view that this was a time for the Government to pull together and unite. We were not aware of Lord Carrington having seen the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister was not of a mood to want resignations; her aim was to recover sovereignty over the Falklands, preferably by diplomatic means. We were not prepared to

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speculate on what might happen in several weeks time. What was at issue was the question of sovereignty; we were not prepared to consider any analogies with Hong Kong or the suggestion of a "lease-back arrangement". We could not say at this time whether Wednesday's debate would be on the adjournment or on a Government motion. No decision had yet been taken on who would lead or close for the Government.

We had heard what Mr Silkin had said and we noted that he would be following up what he had said to ITN on Sunday when the Labour Shadow Cabinet met today. We tended to agree with the ITN interviewer who had questioned Silkin as to what good would be done if Labour refused to endorse Government policy unless resignations were forthcoming.

A genuine mistake had been made on Friday in respect of when the last contact with the Governor had taken place. A message, which was acknowledged, had been sent at 8.33. As the LPS was leaving to go to the House he was told there was no change in the situation and therefore believed that to mean that London had remained in touch with the Governor since the exchange of messages. It was reasonable to expect difficulty in getting information from the Falklands given the circumstances and it was therefore sensible that we should have been cautious in anything we said on Friday. We noted the parallel with the rescue of Mark Thatcher.

We could not say at this stage who might be present when the Prime Minister saw the Governor and the two Marine Commanders. We could not say if the Prime Minister would meet them on the doorstep.

We were not aware of any plans by the Prime Minister to see the Leader of the Opposition nor had the Prime Minister had any meetings with officers of the backbench committees. To suggestions that the Prime Minister was taking direct control of the situation we said of course the Prime Minister was head of Government but there was Ministerial responsibility. The Cabinet had met over the situation on Friday and obviously there had been discussions with the senior Ministers most directly involved. There was no Falkland Islands Cabinet Committee as such.

We said we were aware of no plans for the Prime Minister to visit troops on Ascension Island; we thought it was early days to talk about delaying the Easter recess; the Prime Minister had cancelled some engagements on Friday but was obviously trying to carry out as much of her diary as possible; on diplomatic support we pointed towards the UN resolution; we hoped the Lobby would understand that it would be unwise for us to indicate the time and arrival in Falkland Islands' waters of the Task Force.

IK/HC