

MOD BRIEFING 20 APRIL 1982 Noon

STATEMENT BY MOD SPOKESMAN 20.4.82 1200 HRS

"I have no further information on the disposition of the last force beyond repeating, once again, that it is on route and on time, and I have no further information to give you on the Argentinian Navy or on the Maritime Exclusion Zone except to confirm, once again, that no major Argentinian vessel or auxiliary has breached the Maritime Exclusion Zone. I thought that before throwing myself open for questions, it might be useful, in the light of some recent reports, if I talk for a while on the Armed Forces Pay Review Body. It is true that the Armed Forces Pay Review Body has now left the report on appropriate levels of pay for 1982/83 up to and including the rank of Brigadier, with the Prime Minister. This report is being considered and we therefore cannot comment on any parts of the report beyond reaffirming the information Mr Blaker gave that the Government will maintain its commitment on the maintenance of comparability for 1982/83. I do not know and cannot talk about specific recommendations of the Review Body beyond saying that the Government is maintaining its commitment of comparability to the Armed Forces".

MOD PRESS BRIEFING 20.4.82 HELD IN HISTORIC ROOM 27 AT 1200 HRS

- Q. Is there any news of the Atlantic Conveyor and it's cargoes?
- A. No further news - we will see what we can get.
- Q. Can you tell us the name of the operation?
- A. I have made extensive enquiries and am able to tell you that, for one reason or another, I cannot tell you the code name.
- Q. Do any of your naval colleagues know the nature of the conversion of the Atlantic Conveyor?
- A. I have no knowledge of the details.
- Q. Is it definitely the position that she is being converted to fly and will be able to carry Harriers?
- A. The aircraft will fly from her but not operate from her.
- Q. Can you comment on a small element of the Task Force breaking away from the main fleet and heading for South Georgia?
- A. I am able to comment on dispositions or locations of the Task Force.
- Q. Is there a basis of truth in it?
- A. I am not to speculate or to encourage your speculation.
- Q. Can you explain why some reporters are able to say where their ships have been?
- A. Reporters on board are able to say, within certain limits which are known to the Task Force Commander, where they have been but I am not in a position to give you details of the Task Force.
- Q. Why did it take nearly 2 weeks to get to Ascension Island - are they going slow?
- A. The Task Force is on course and on time. There has been no deviation from course or time.
- Q. Can you summarise what is releasable with regard to the submarine?
- A. It would not surprise us if there were a submarine. Where it is or isn't is a whole field I don't want to enter into.
- Q. How would you describe the activities of the Argentinian fleet that has been at sea - what is it doing?
- A. I can only say that it was either a propoganda exercise or it was exercising itself in a naval fashion and I have no reason at present to change that speculation.
- Q. Most of the Argentinian ships are at sea and are not near the MEZ - can you be a little more specific as to what they are doing?
- A. No I cannot.

SECRET

The following information was provided to TV Eye. It gives operational and reserve strengths of the Royal Navy. There is some change in definitions of reserve fleet over the years. Source: Navy Historical Branch.

	1948			1956		1961	
	Operational		Trials and Experimental	Reserve			
	(a)		(b)	(c)	(a)	(a)	(c)
Destroyers	2		2	1	0	5	0
Corvettes	-		-	-	-	4	4
Flotilla CDRs	0		3	3	2	3	0
At Flotilla CDRs	4		3	0	2	4	0
Escort CDRs	0		0	1	0	0	0
Destroyers	16		2	13	9	12	5
Submarines	34		18	65	21	44	29
Training Class	-		-	-	3	-	-
Frigates	25		18	136	28	110	49
* Commando Carrier-				-	-	-	1
Submarines	26		8	31	44	15	31

** Two Fast Line Oilers are included in the 56 figures but are not included in the information to TV Eye


SPO(A)

20/4/42.