

NOTE TO PRESS OFFICERS

FALKLAND ISLANDS: NON USE OF FORCE

1. A problem arose in the House of Commons in the Secretary of State's penultimate supplementary reply, copy attached. Referring to the use of force, he said (inadvertently) 'I will exclude it so long as negotiations are in play'.

2. He subsequently clarified this in a short, personal statement to the House, on the following lines: 'The whole thrust of my answers was to indicate that I was using every endeavour - as indeed I am - to resolve this problem by peaceful means. Unfortunately, it is a fact of life that the use of force cannot be ruled out. I am told that my penultimate answer might have given the House a different impression. However hard I am trying, the use of force cannot at any stage be ruled out.'

Line to Take

3. The phrase in the original reply was inadvertent. As soon as it was drawn to his attention, Mr Pym went back into the House to correct it.

4. No conclusion should be drawn either from this slip of the tongue or from the correction.

5. If the original formula had been allowed to stand, it would have given the Argentinians a lever which they could have exploited to our disadvantage by indefinitely prolonging the negotiations.

6. In making ^{this} correction, Mr Pym was simply restoring the

position to what it had been before: the Government is determined to work for a peaceful solution if it is humanly obtainable; but we shall not shrink from the use of force if that is necessary.

NF

21 April 1982