

LOBBY BRIEFING: LORD PRESIDENT time: 4,15 PM date: 22.4.82

NORTHERN IRELAND

Wednesday's debate on the White Paper would be a "take note" motion. It would be amendable but, even though, he assumed it would be confirmed. There was a good deal of pressure from Members for a very full debate on the White Paper before considering the legislation and there was no anxiety on this point between Opposition and Government. He could give no indication of timing for the Second Reading of the NI Bill but agreed this would normally happen about two weeks after presentation. On timing/duration of the Committee Stage, he said this Stage was very often elastic. He described the Government's proposals as a very thoughtful attempt at controlled devolution which had broad assent in Britain. It was wise not to look for enthusiasm.

FALKLANDS

If there had to be an emergency debate next week, room would have to be found. Three days had been set aside for the Finance Bill and there was some advantage in getting the Finance Bill over and done with well ahead of its normal timetable. But if a day had to be found for the Falklands, this would not upset timing on the Finance Bill.

POSSIBLE STATEMENT BY MR PYM

Nothing had been pencilled in but this did not mean anything subtle or sinister; if Mr Pym got through his talks and came back over the weekend then he might make a Statement on Monday.

FEELING WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT ON FALKLANDS

After a difficult start the Government had regained greater control over the situation. The diplomatic initiative had gone well; the search for a diplomatic solution was going well and the activities of the military Task Force should be seen in the context of a diplomatic solution. The international support, in particular from Western Europe, was most helpful. There was very strong support and belief that the balance between the diplomatic and military postures had been well struck and there was confidence that the Foreign Secretary could use that. The Government was united.

FALKLANDS VETO

Nobody had used the term "veto" in any Statements. The first objective was to achieve Argentine withdrawal; this was to be followed by restoration of British administration and all initiatives should be calibrated against this objective. Then there would be a long term negotiation. He thought there was no sense in adding to what the Prime Minister and Mr Pym had already said on this.

ADMIRAL WOODWARD'S REMARKS

He was not prepared to comment on an air exclusion zone representing Government policy; this he regarded as operational deployment on which he was not prepared to comment.

DEFENCE WHITE PAPER

In answer to the suggestion that the paper had been re-written and reflected changes in policy he said that before making his Statement in the House he had of course consulted MoD. He understood that although

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All advanced, the paper was not complete. The Secretary of State for Defence was producing an addendum and clearly this would relate to the Falklands. Although he did not refer to Trident in the House, there was no question of any change of policy in respect of our nuclear deterrent. He could not say anything helpful on timing as he did not know. He did not know what the addendum would say but he assumed, stressing again that he did not know, that it would cover a range of issues, not be a restitution, but would consider, judge and vindicate the White Paper in the light of what had been demanded by the Falkland situation. He added that the House would require more than the original White Paper. He did not know if the decision to produce an addendum resulted from Mr Nott's appearance before Tory backbenchers.

## DIPLOMATIC INITIATIVE

Support for this within the Government was full-hearted. By virtue of its success to date there was strong belief we should continue to play this hand but clearly it proceeded in parallel with the Task Force. It was an advantage to have the Americans undertaking their intermediary role. This was helpful to our position and the fulfilment of UN resolution 502. The extent of explicit moral support from a number of countries and the material support provided by Western European and other countries represented a quite formidable diplomatic position. The Argentine position by comparison was quite difficult.

## MR PYM'S SECOND STATEMENT YESTERDAY

Clearly the Foreign Secretary was in no doubt that before leaving for Washington there should be no ambiguity or misunderstanding and therefore he returned to the Chamber. This might be news today but would be lost next week but might perhaps be dug out in years to come by historians.

## COMMITMENT TO DIPLOMATIC SETTLEMENT

He had no reason to doubt the total loyalty of public servants to the views of Ministers. He noted that the mood of the House was quite mercurial. Within the Conservative Party there was certainly a preponderance of support for the diplomatic settlement although some, for example, Alan Clarke, did not accept this; but these people were not significant.

## CIVIL SERVICE PAY

He was not in a position to judge the views or votes of colleagues on this but obviously this matter would be of some importance over the next few weeks.

The morning Lobby was repeated.

## PAY BODIES

Reports had been received and were under consideration but had not gone to Cabinet.

## CABINET

Would have been brought up-to-date on the Falklands. The meeting that followed was not related to the Falklands.



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## AIR EXCLUSION ZONE

It was not necessary to announce such a zone if it was obvious that we had air superiority. It had been made very clear that the use of force could not be ruled out and we reminded the Lobby of the terms of the MEZ announcement which left open the possibility of further action. The Lobby should not regard the C in C's remarks as representative of Government policy. His statement did not suggest that it had been formally cleared or approved in London.

## SOUTH GEORGIA

The Prime Minister in answer to the Question on this was making clear that the Falkland Islands and the Dependencies were two separate issues not necessarily bound together. It was important to make the position clear. We could not say what the future of the Falklands would be but the position of South Georgia would be a quite separate issue and it had been a separate bone of contention with the Argentine in the past.

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