

LOBBY BRIEFING

time: 4.00 date: 27.4.82

This morning's lobby was repeated.

We said that Mr Pym and other EC Foreign Ministers had discussed the Mandate during the morning in Luxembourg and had no doubt covered the Falkland Islands and Middle East over lunch. We understood there would be a presidency press conference later in the day.

We drew attention to a Foreign Office press notice announcing Frank Judd as a member of the UK delegation to the Second UN Special Session on disarmament. He would go as a special adviser representing non-government organisations.

FALKLAND ISLANDS

Questioned about the "evaporation" of unqualified support for the PM in the Commons we said that those who said support had evaporated should be asked to comment but our impression was that perhaps the Leader of the Opposition had been trying to distance himself somewhat.

We read out the statement issued in New York by the UN Secretary General, drew attention to the emphasis on Resolution 502 and indicated the document's low status. We promised to give the lobby more information later. We said that the UN had been unable to secure compliance with its own mandatory resolution and that Mr Haig was still in play. We acknowledged that Argentine failure to wish to see him in Buenos Aires was not a promising sign but he still had not talked to them about the US ideas and our comments on them. We thought that Mr Haig would certainly have communicated with Buenos Aires.

In further questioning about the UN Secretary General's statement we said it did not necessarily require a formal answer and we did not accept that the statement was aimed at the UK and its "escalation" in South Georgia and possibly on the Falkland Islands themselves. We repeatedly reiterated the terms of Resolution 502 and our right of self-defence under Article 51 of the UN Charter. We were backing our diplomacy with arms. We had to persuade the Argentines to leave the Islands.

In response to the idea that we were not returning to the UN because they would be unhelpful and take months to reach a decision which would not necessarily go in our favour we said that we had done well in the UN so far and the outcome of any further approach could certainly not be predicted and none was planned.

To suggestions of a news black-out from the MoD we saw the notion as ludicrous considering all that we saw in the newspapers every day. We had always said that we would not discuss operational matters.

On Mr Foot's point that the Government had lost world opinion we said that view did not square with the opinion polls and other indications.

SECOND LOBBY

The lobby was reconvened a short time later on the subject of the statement by the UN Secretary General. We said that the Secretary General's appeal had no formal status whatsoever and had been issued simply as a press release after the daily UN press conference in New York. It was the least formal piece of paper which could be issued in the UN and had not been circulated as a document of the UN Security Council or General Assembly. It had also not been communicated to us in any formal way. In New York this was an informal and minor event. Sir Anthony Parsons had spoken to the Secretary General as soon as the document was issued. He had told the Secretary General that any suggestion that we had failed to comply with Resolution 502 was unacceptable and that it was Argentina which was in breach of the Resolution. The Secretary General took these points.