

LOBBY BRIEFING

time: 11 AM date: 29.4.82

PRIME MINISTER'S DAY

The Prime Minister is working in No 10 this morning and will be in the House this afternoon.

At 9.00 am the Prime Minister chaired a meeting of the group of Ministers concerned with the Falkland Islands (Foreign Secretary, Home Secretary, S/S Defence, Chancellor of the Duchy, CDS).

CABINET

At 10.00 am she chaired a meeting of the Cabinet /Falkland Islands, Parliamentary Affairs, Foreign Affairs, Community Affairs, Public Service Pay/. All present plus the Attorney General.

QUESTIONS

This afternoon at 3.15 pm the Prime Minister will be in the House for Questions.

She will then open the Debate on the Falkland Islands.

IN THE HOUSE

BUSINESS QUESTION

DEBATE

Business Question will be followed by a Debate on the Adjournment on the Falkland Islands. The Prime Minister will open and Mr Pym will wind up, while for the Opposition Mr Foot will open and Mr Healey will wind up.

ANSWERS OF INTEREST

No 111 Written 3.30 pm; Sir Hector Munro to ask S/S Environment if he has issued any further advice to the Sports Council about sporting contacts with Argentina. (Answer will indicate advice that there should be no sporting contact between Argentines and Britons on British or Argentine soil. This does not rule out multi-national events such as the World Cup. New point is that this is aimed at sporting contacts at individual level, not just clubs, etc.)

No 112 Written 3.30 pm; Mr Peter Mills to ask S/S Energy when he will publish his next report on oil and gas development in the UK. (This answer heralds publication of the Brown Book with associated Press Notice.)

NOTE:

If it becomes necessary to hold a Lobby Briefing over the coming weekend, we have arranged that the No 10 switchboard, instead of transferring a call to a journalist on this subject, will be able to give the time and place of any briefing that has been arranged.

FALKLANDS

Cabinet: Cabinet has received copy of Haig proposals. We confirmed that Chief of Defence Staff did not attend the full Cabinet meeting.

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Military action: We do not feel inhibited from using our military arm simply because diplomatic activities are still going on. Declaration of Total Exclusion Zone effectively says "You have been warned",

Expectations: There is no change in our basic lack of optimism. The focus remains on BA and we have not heard from them yet.

Timescale: We are not setting any specific targets. Haig does not want to get into another endless shuttle but he will have to decide if he is still in play. After that we will not be hanging about. Resolution 502 remains and we retain the right to reclaim the Falklands.

Diplomacy: Not sure we should go to UN. We shall have to think about future action if Haig decides to call it a day. Not prepared to be sidetracked and intend to keep pressure on the Argentine. If Haig gets response from BA we would respond, too. At moment our considerations are still maturing.

TEZ: If Argentina accepts Haig proposals any decision about operation of the TEZ would be made by MOD in light of Argentine action. The timing of the imposition of the TEZ was in relation to our ability to enforce it, not in relation to diplomatic activity.

Debate: Expect PM's speech to be about 20-25 minutes. Know of no planned statements.

Foot: Labour support was a bonus not a requirement. Their change of tack will not affect Government's position.

South Georgia: We assume Haig proposals relate only to Falklands and not South Georgia.

Foreign Support: No Scandinavian ship helping us. Purely British effort. The Tidepool which is helping the fleet is not yet a Chilean ship but was diverted on its way to delivery in Chile and is flying the British flag.

Pope: We have had no contact with the Vatican either over Pope's visit or his telegram.

Israel: We are concerned about reports and have been in contact with Israeli government through diplomatic channels in London and Tel Aviv, but have no official response.

JL

25 March, *Official Report*, c. 409, concerning the price of beet sugar, whether he will publish the amount of the storage levy in each year and indicate which figures include the levy and which do not.

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: The information requested is as follows:

Marketing Years	Storage levy £ per tonne
1973-74	4.59
	6.73 (April 1974)
1974-75	6.24 (July 1974)
	5.54 (August 1974)
	4.62 (from September 1974)
1975-76	5.20
1976-77	10.03
1977-78	10.38
1978-79	12.56
1979-80	12.65
1980-81	17.88

Note: The conversion into sterling has been made at the representative rate applicable on 1 July each year except where otherwise indicated.

As indicated in note (1) to part (b) of my reply of 25 March—[Vol. 20, c. 409.]—all prices listed included the storage levy.

Tomatoes

Mr. Banks asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will publish the figures for each of the last three months compared with the figures for the corresponding periods last year, for tomatoes imported into the United Kingdom.

Mrs. Fenner: Imports of tomatoes in the first quarter of 1981 were 62,517 tonnes. Comparable information for 1982 is not yet available.

Fishing Industry

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will publish figures showing how current aid to the fishing industry compares with that given by other European Economic Community countries with fishing fleets.

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: Comparison between the aids given to our fishing industry and those given in other countries is made difficult by differences in the type of aids provided and in fleet structures and by currency movements. I shall write to the hon. Member as soon as possible with our assessment of the present position.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is the scale of present aid to the fishing industry expressed per fishing vessel; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: Grants of 25 per cent. and loans of up to 50 per cent. are available towards the cost of the construction or improvement of fishing vessels. In addition, payments made under the Fishing Vessel Temporary Support Scheme 1981 were on a scale from £350 for vessels of under 25 ft. in length up to £53,800 for vessels of over 190 ft. Full details of the latter scheme were placed in the Library of the House on 30 April 1981.

Agriculture Industry

Mr. Robert Atkins asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will assess the general agricultural conditions in England and Wales during April 1982.

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: The economic conditions and prospects of the agricultural industry are assessed each autumn rather than month by month. The results of the most recent such exercise are set out in the "Annual Review of Agriculture 1982" White Paper (Cmnd. 8491).

Norwegian Fishing Quota

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he is making arrangements for taking up or rolling over the remainder of the Norwegian fishing quota allocated to the United Kingdom and which would have been fished by vessels requisitioned for the Falklands operation.

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: I do not expect that the recent requisitioning of certain trawlers will have any significant effect on the level of catches by United Kingdom vessels in Norwegian waters in 1982.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how much of the Norwegian fishing quota made available to the United Kingdom by the European Economic Community remains to be caught; and what are the implications for further quotas if the present quota is not taken up.

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: No allocation has yet been made between member States of the European Community of the fishing opportunities available to their vessels in Norwegian waters during 1982.

DEFENCE

Falkland Islands

Mr. Skeet asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether he proposes to extend the maritime blockade of the Falkland Islands to prevent Argentine aircraft from overflying the 200-mile zone.

Mr. Marlow asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether, in the event of hostilities with the Argentine, he will consider all military craft including communication craft, whether sea or air, which give assistance to Argentina hostile and liable to attack irrespective of their nationality.

Mr. Nott: The following statement was issued by the Government earlier today:

"From 1100 GMT on 30th April 1982, a Total Exclusion Zone will be established around the Falkland Islands. The outer limit of this Zone is the same as for the Maritime Exclusion Zone established on Monday 12th April 1982, namely a circle of 200 nautical miles radius from latitude 51 degrees 40 minutes South, 59 degrees 30 minutes West. From the time indicated, the Exclusion Zone will apply not only to Argentine warships and Argentine naval auxiliaries but also to any other ship, whether naval or merchant vessel, which is operating in support of the illegal occupation of the Falkland Islands by Argentine forces. The Exclusion Zone will also apply to any aircraft, whether military or civil, which is operating in support of the illegal occupation. Any ship and any aircraft whether military or civil which is found within this Zone without due authority from the MOD in London will be regarded as operating in support of the illegal occupation and will therefore be regarded as hostile and will be liable to be attacked by British Forces.

Also from the time indicated, Port Stanley airport will be closed; and any aircraft on the ground in the Falkland Islands will be regarded as present in support of the illegal occupation and accordingly is liable to attack.

These measures are without prejudice to the right of the UK to take whatever additional measures may be needed in exercise of its right of self-defence, under Article 51 of the UN Charter."

Hovercraft (South Atlantic)

Mr. Stephen Ross asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether he is considering the suitability of the hovercraft for operations in the South Atlantic.

Mr. Blaker: There are at present no plans to use hovercraft in the South Atlantic.

NATO and Warsaw Pact Forces

Mrs. Knight asked the Secretary of State for Defence when the comparative study of North Atlantic Treaty Organisations and Warsaw Pact forces which is to be prepared within the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation will be published.

Mr. Blaker: The NATO authorities intend to publish this study on 4 May.

Ulster Defence Regiment

Mr. William Ross asked the Secretary of State for Defence what is the total cost of refurbishing the headquarters of 5th battalion Ulster Defence Regiment at Ballykelly.

Mr. Wiggan: There are no plans to refurbish this headquarters. Apart from day-to-day maintenance, works undertaken during the past 12 months have cost just over £15,000.

Mr. William Ross asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the companies in the Ulster Defence Regiment which have reduced the number of platoons, and indicate what were the projected savings, and the amount of saving actually achieved; how many part-time members there were before the amalgamations took place; and what is the current number.

Mr. Wiggan: Adjustments to the numbers of platoons within Ulster Defence Regiments companies are made from time to time to reflect operational requirements, and not with the aim of achieving financial savings. It is not possible to identify from existing records which companies have been reorganised in this way and what changes in personnel numbers may have resulted.

Mr. William Ross asked the Secretary of State for Defence what are the duties of members of the Ulster Defence Regiment at United Kingdom land frontier road crossings; and what are the duties of the Royal Military Police at such checkpoints.

Mr. Wiggan: It is not the practice to disclose details of operational duties.

Requisitioned Vessels

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Secretary of State for Defence why fishermen on vessels requisitioned for minesweeping were not given the same opportunity to volunteer for service as merchant seamen on requisitioned vessels.

Mr. Blaker: Unlike the merchant ships that have been taken up from trade to perform support and service tasks, the fishing vessels requisitioned as auxiliary minesweepers have been temporarily commissioned into the Royal Navy. As the vessels are to be engaged on a specialist and potentially dangerous task, it was decided that they should be manned by Royal Navy personnel experienced in this role.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Secretary of State for Defence on what basis fishermen made unemployed by the requisitioning of vessels for the Falklands will be compensated; and whether their catch share will be taken into account in calculating such compensation.

Mr. Blaker: The question of compensation is being discussed as a matter of urgency with the shipowners concerned.

Christian Salvesen (Contracts)

Mr. Foulkes asked the Secretary of State for Defence what contracts or other commercial relations Christian Salvesen has with his Department.

Mr. Pattie: My Department has no record of any direct MOD contracts or commercial relations with Christian Salvesen.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Spare-time Schools

Mr. Freeson asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list any powers he has to grant-aid self-help spare-time schools, sometimes known as Saturday schools.

Dr. Boyson: My right hon. Friend has no such powers.

Mr. Freeson asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what information he has regarding the numbers of self-help, spare-time schools sometimes known as Saturday schools.

Dr. Boyson: Statistical information of this kind is not collected centrally.

Student Unions

Mr. Shersby asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what information he has received concerning ultra vires payments made by student unions; what is his policy towards such payments; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: The matter is still being actively considered.

Central Bureau for Educational Visits and Exchanges

Mr. Alfred Morris asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what consideration he has given to the latest annual report of the Central Bureau for Educational Visits and Exchanges; and if he will arrange for a copy of the report to be placed in the Library.

Mr. William Shelton: I have received and studied the bureau's report for 1979-80, which was approved by the bureau's trustees in February. Copies of it have been placed in the Library.