

# LOBBY BRIEFING

time: 11.00 date: 4.5.82

## PRIME MINISTER'S DAY

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

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

## CABINET

At 10.30am she chaired a meeting of the Cabinet Falkland Islands.

At 12.00 noon she will meet David Steel MP and David Owen MP in the House. The Foreign Secretary will also be present.

## QUESTIONS

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

## MEETING OF MINISTERS

At 4.00pm the Prime Minister is due to chair a Meeting of Ministers. [E: The Invergordon Smelter; Remedial Measures; Defence of Refusal of Power Contract; Fixed Cross Channel Link.]

## PRESS NOTICES

Appointment of Mr Rex Richards and Mr Anthony Caro as Trustees of the Tate Gallery.

## IN THE HOUSE STATEMENTS

At 3.30pm Mr Pym will make a statement on the Falkland Islands followed by a Statement by Mr Nott on the Falkland Islands.

## ANSWERS OF INTEREST

No 47/35 Written 4.00pm: Mr Michael Meacher to ask the Prime Minister if she is not in a position to announce the form of the review of the events leading up to the Falkland Islands situation. [Answer will reaffirm the intent to complete the review but the time is not right to announce the details of the review.]

No 179 Written 4.00pm: Jo Richardson to ask the Prime Minister whether she will make a statement on the Security Commission's report on the security services. [Answer will say hope to make an announcement shortly].

No 231 Written 4.00pm: Mr Eldon Griffiths to ask the Prime Minister if she will make a statement on reports of co-operation between the FGR and Argentina on nuclear weapons. [Answer will refer to statement by West Germany on 19 April denying support].

## FALKLANDS

We confirmed today's meeting between PM and Mr Owen and Mr Steel but saw no reason why it should become a regular feature. Future meetings would depend on outcome of this first one. PM has always made it clear she is willing to meet any MP. Owen and Steel will probably get a military appreciation but no operational details.

## DEFENCE ZONE

There is no question of defining exactly where the defence area lies. It exists to protect our fleet. We have made it quite clear since April 23 that we will take any necessary action to protect our fleet in the face of any move to threaten it. Not prepared to discuss the whereabouts of any element of our fleet. Argentines know that if they come looking for trouble they will get it. It is not a prescribed 200 mile bubble around

the fleet - it is as big as required. Despite its age the cruiser was a threat because of its firepower. The captain of the submarine was operating under the TEZ rules and the defence area rules and the standing Rules of Engagement as well as under the political direction which sanctions those rules. Not necessary to refer back to commander.

#### WORLD OPINION

Our object is to maintain public opinion. Not aware that we have lost it to any degree. We do not enjoy using this force. We are the most reluctant nation to engage in hostilities, but people have short memories: Argentina started it. We are still operating under the premise of minimum force.

#### EEC

We confirmed there is a meeting of political directors today. Any question of asking EEC to renew their economic sanctions on Argentine does not come up until May 16.

#### BELGRANO

We shoot to sink, as Ian McDonald said over the weekend. The cruiser had two escort ships which we did not attack.

#### ARGENTINE PROPAGANDA

We are concerned about the effect such propaganda may have on the families of our servicemen as well as its effect on attitude of Argentine public, but it is no more than we would expect from a military dictatorship.

#### PRISONERS

Not yet sent back those caught on S. Georgia but will have to do so under terms of Geneva Convention. We are still not at war but these prisoners are covered by Convention. Food parcels are a matter for the Red Cross to sort out.

#### DIPLOMACY

Search for diplomatic solution and diplomatic contacts are being maintained but we do not see an early end to the issue and have no reason to be optimistic at this stage. We shall continue to remind people forcefully of Resolution 502 and Article 51 and the Argentine's refusal to make any efforts to comply with the former.

JL