

LOBBY BRIEFING

time: 11.00 date: 28.5.82

PRIME MINISTER'S DAY

The Prime Minister is working at No 10 all day and is expected to go to Chequers this evening.

At 9.30am the Prime Minister chaired a meeting of the Group of Ministers concerned with the Falklands (Foreign Sec., Defence Sec., Home Sec., the Chancellor of the Duchy, the Attorney General and the CDS) ending at 11.30am.

At 11.45am the Prime Minister hopes to meet a group of policemen from St Albans who have been raising funds for a mentally handicapped children's centre. She will write a message in their presentation book. (Police have raised £8,000 of total £80,000).

IN THE HOUSE

Order Paper not available due to printing problems.

PM'S MOVEMENTS

We said that the PM was hoping to spend the holiday weekend at Chequers, probably returning to Downing Street on Monday evening. She would be in No 10 for the rest of next week, leaving for Versailles mid-pm on Friday and coming back on Sunday evening.

We thought it likely that she would hold daily meetings with the Ministers concerned with the Falklands next week, possibly starting on Monday at Chequers. We confirmed that PM had no plans for statement or interviews at present.

MILITARY

We were unable to add anything about the movement of our troops on East Falkland except that they had made progress. We thought MoD would hold a briefing around lunchtime but was unlikely to be substantial. They had told us that two Skyhawks had been knocked out yesterday and that Skyhawks (not Canberras) had attacked the bridehead forces.

Asked why there was a news blackout and how long it would last we said it was for sound operational reasons - information could endanger our troops and would be like giving the opposition a free reconnaissance flight over the Island - and would end as soon as it was thought safe to issue more information. This could well be when the current immediate objective had been achieved - whatever that might be. We thought that it was not a question of radio silence between the Task Force and England, these signals were undoubtedly coming back. We agreed that it might be necessary to issue specific denials to Argentine claims from time to time.

LONG TERM PLANS

Our immediate aim remained the restoration of British administration. We thought it premature to talk about whether the Governor would return to Stanley. On Eric Ogden's letter concerning a Governor-in-exile office we repeated the Ministerial view that this was impracticable and unnecessary since there were adequate contact points in the FCO and elsewhere. There had been no changes or proposals for change on the question of Falkland Islanders nationality status.

We saw no differences between Mr Pym's remarks on television last night concerning the need for repairing fences with Argentines in the long term. All Ministers have said we have sought to negotiate over many years but these negotiations were broken off by Argentina but they will have to be resumed eventually.

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On events today we said that the meeting of OD(SA) was primarily military since there was very little diplomatic activity. We have sent a reply to UNSG via Parsons, so the UNSG could be said to be still in play.

We did not know whether the PM was watching or listening to the arrival of the Pope and his speech. We thought it likely she would have had its contents relayed to her, but we had no reaction. Up to a point his remarks could have been expected. We confirmed that she would not meet the Pope unless he asked her to do so.

Of the Beaconsfield by-election result, we said she was naturally well pleased.

FURTHER BRIEFINGS

Not planning to do any more lobbies until Tuesday 11.00am but would naturally respond to requests from lobby officers.

JL.

PRIME MINISTER

Falkland Islands

Q1. Mr. Michael Brown asked the Prime Minister if she will make a statement on the Falkland Islands.

The Prime Minister (Mrs. Margaret Thatcher): The reply to this question is inevitably longer than usual.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence made a full statement yesterday. The House would not expect me to go into details about the operations in progress, but our forces on the ground are now moving from the bridgehead. Yesterday my right hon. Friend gave initial figures for casualties on HMS "Coventry" and the "Atlantic Conveyor". The House will wish to know that the latest information is that one of the crew of HMS "Coventry" is known to have died, 20 are missing and at least 23 of the survivors are injured. Four of those on board the "Atlantic Conveyor" are known to have died, eight are missing, including the master, and five of the survivors are injured. The next of kin have been informed. We all mourn those tragic losses.

Yesterday the United Nations Security Council adopted unanimously a resolution on the Falkland Islands. It reaffirms resolution 502 and requests the Secretary-General to undertake a renewed mission of good offices, to enter into contact with Britain and Argentina with a view to negotiating mutually acceptable conditions for a ceasefire and to report again to the Security Council within seven days. We shall, of course, co-operate fully with the Secretary-General in that.

In voting for the resolution, our representative at the United Nations made it clear that in view of Argentina's continued refusal to implement resolution 502, the only acceptable condition for a ceasefire is that it should be unequivocally linked with a firm and unconditional Argentine commitment immediately to commence withdrawal of its forces from the islands.

Mr. Brown: I thank my right hon. Friend for that detailed reply and acknowledge what she said about the United Nations. Will she take this opportunity to make it clear that the diplomatic proposals that were put forward and that have been continually put forward by the United Kingdom contained proposals for a British withdrawal, but that as the position has now changed, and since those proposals have been rejected consistently by Argentina, there can be no question of a British withdrawal of forces?

The Prime Minister: My hon. Friend is quite right. In the published proposals that we debated last Thursday there was a linked withdrawal of British forces and Argentine forces. Those proposals have been withdrawn and as our ambassador to the United Nations made clear when he voted for the resolution there can now be no question of a British withdrawal. He said:

"We are talking about Argentine withdrawal. We cannot now accept that Argentine withdrawal be linked in any way to parallel British withdrawal."

Mr. Foot: May I first join the right hon. Lady in the expressions of feeling about our forces and their families, and our concern that the fighting should be brought to an end as soon as possible with the minimum number of casualties. On the diplomatic aspect of the matter, to which she referred, while it is clearly true that the reaffirmation of resolution 502 involves the withdrawal of the Argentine forces, does the right hon. Lady also agree

that it is right and in conformity with resolution 502, that there should be further proposals on the table, if not necessarily the same as offered previously, nevertheless one that will offer the Argentines an alternative to unconditional surrender? Does the right hon. Lady agree that that is a sensible approach, that it will reduce the danger of casualties, and that it should be included in her response to the Secretary-General?

The Prime Minister: The essential feature of resolution 502 is the unconditional demand for immediate withdrawal of all Argentine forces from the Falklands. That was to be followed by negotiations. Negotiations were, of course, in progress when the Argentine invaded. They had been in progress for some considerable time, but the Falkland Islanders did not wish British sovereignty to pass in any way to the Argentine. We should co-operate with the Secretary-General, but in the terms I have stated.

Mr. Foot: What I was asking the right hon. Lady to do was not in any way in conflict with resolution 502, and certainly not in conflict with what was decided at the United Nations yesterday. But the Government will have to make some response to those proposals. My suggestion—I believe it to be a sensible proposal that will reduce the prospect of casualties—is that the British Government should be making some proposals in response to the Secretary-General's approaches, which will offer an alternative to unconditional surrender. If the fighting continues to the bitter end, many more lives will be lost.

The Prime Minister: The objective of sending British forces and to try to retake by force what was taken from us by force is first, repossession, second, restoration of British administration and third, reconstruction, followed by consultation with the islanders—a true consultation—about their wishes and interests in the future.

Mr. Foot: Is that all the right hon. Lady is going to say—

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: I hope so.

Mr. Foot: in response to the Secretary-General's approaches? The resolution that was passed by the Security Council yesterday was properly supported by the British Government. It envisaged discussions on this matter. I urge the Government to consider more far-reaching proposals than what the right hon. Lady has given from the Dispatch Box today.

The Prime Minister: The talks with the Secretary-General will be about unequivocal withdrawal of Argentine forces in accordance with resolution 502 as a condition for a ceasefire. After that, we shall be in repossession of the islands. We then wish to restore British administration. Administration has to continue under existing British law and under existing democratic institutions. There will be a great deal of reconstruction work to do, and also talk about development of further resources. It will take some time for the islanders to crystallise their views, but then we must have discussions with them about the longer term interests. It will be most unwise for us to give away any of that in advance.

Q2. Mr. Latham asked the Prime Minister whether she will make a statement on the Falkland Islands.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I have just given.

Mr. Latham: Since major military action may even now be taking place, will my right hon. Friend confirm that dictatorships rarely understand the moral strength and courage of a democracy and that democracies themselves understand the need to avoid probing questions on military details and secrets that might unintentionally help the enemy?

The Prime Minister: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. We enjoy full freedom of speech in a democracy. I know that my hon. Friend and many hon. Members are very much aware that too much discussion about the timing and details of operations can only help the enemy, and hinder and make things more difficult for our forces. In wartime there used to be a phrase "Careless talk costs lives". It still holds.

Mr. Meacher: Will the right hon. Lady reconsider her answer to my right hon. Friend? In view of the further military pressure that is now being exerted by British forces will the Prime Minister now undertake to re-table the British proposed draft interim agreement so that, without loss of military momentum in the interim but, equally, to avoid risk of substantial loss of life in retaking Port Stanley, these proposals, acceptable to Britain and requiring withdrawal of Argentine forces from the islands, shall lie on the table unamended, ready for immediate Argentine signature as a condition of ceasefire?

The Prime Minister: No, Sir. I reaffirm what I said to the right hon. Gentleman.

Dr. Owen: Will the Prime Minister accept that many hon. Members understand that, following the repossession of part of the Falkland Islands, it is reasonable for the Government to make it clear that the exact parallelism of the withdrawal procedure that was included in the Government's document put before the House of Thursday now has to be re-thought? However, will the Prime Minister be careful before she abandons the principles embraced in that document? It won't Britain many friends in the world as being a reasonable negotiating position on which it might be possible to achieve withdrawal of the Argentine forces, leading to an honourable negotiated settlement that would last.

The Prime Minister: The proposals in that document were for an interim arrangement so that we should not have further conflict. The proposals in that document were rejected. We have now gone into the islands to do what I believe the islanders wish—to repossess them, to restore British administration, to reconstruct the life of the islands and then to consult the islanders on what they want. That will obviously depend in some measure on what other nations are prepared to do, how much they are prepared to invest, how much they are prepared to develop the islands and, of course, on what arrangements can be procured for the long term security of the islands. I am sure that that is the right way to approach the problem.

Mr. Temple-Morris: Can my right hon. Friend give any information about whether known arms suppliers to Argentina have agreed to British requests to cease supplies pending a cessation of hostilities? Can she say whether they are keeping their word on this important subject?

The Prime Minister: There appear to be very active efforts on the part of the Argentines to secure further supplies of missiles and spares and armaments in various parts of the world. We have obviously been in touch with

the nations concerned about this, and the political heads, but we are very much aware that supplies may be reaching Argentina, not directly from those countries but through third parties.

Mr. Gordon Wilson: Does the Prime Minister appreciate that the closing quote in her speech yesterday "If England do rest but true" caused considerable offence in Scotland? If this affair is not a purely English one, would the right hon. Lady kindly repair the discourtesy by paying tribute to the sacrifice and role played by service men of Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish origin?

The Prime Minister: I am sorry if by quoting Shakespeare I caused offence. I did consider it for a moment, but thought that I could not really edit Shakespeare. As a matter of fact, I thought that Shakespeare belonged to Scotland almost as much as to the rest of the United Kingdom. I remind the hon. Gentleman that I went to Perth and made a major speech, in which I pointed out that some of the best characters who are regarded as belonging to the whole of the United Kingdom are distinctly Scottish in character. I gladly pay tribute to them and to the splendid efforts of Scottish service men, merchant men and people everywhere.

Engagements

Q4. Mr. Dubs asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for 27 May.

The Prime Minister: This morning I presided at a meeting of the Cabinet and had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in this House, I shall be having further meetings later today.

Mr. Dubs: Does the Prime Minister agree that the long-term security of the islanders and peace in the South Atlantic could be better established were the Government to make a clearer statement at this stage of the basis on which the foundations for such a settlement could be achieved?

The Prime Minister: It is part of democracy that one consults the people themselves to find out their wishes and interests. I would have thought that every hon. Member understood that. After the hostilities are over it will take some time for the views of the islanders to crystallise. Those views will depend in some measure on what other people are prepared to do. All this will take time to talk through, and I am sure that we are right to take that time.

Questions to Ministers

Mr. Tam Dalyell (West Lothian): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Recalling that Mr. Speaker Selwyn Lloyd and Mr. Speaker King often used to let Question Time to my right hon. Friend the Member for Huyton (Sir H. Wilson) run for a quarter of an hour extra, and accepting that, quite rightly, the Prime Minister took some time today to answer a substantive question, is there not a case for allowing Prime Minister's Question Time to run to another five minutes?

Mr. Speaker: I well recall, during the days of that extra time, the strong complaints that came from supporters of the right hon. Member for Huyton (Sir H. Wilson).

[Mr. Powell]

that view are opposed to the Union and recognise that local government is a commendation of the Union that that myth has been put about.

I believe that in my short speech that the Committee has received with relative patience, despite the hour, I have opened up preliminarily a large part of the area that will have to be considered in more detail as the Committee proceeds with its work.

I repeat that we are not saying: "Force the Assembly to have this or no alternative." What we are saying is that the Assembly ought to be able to choose these alternatives if it wishes. It ought to be able to choose executive without legislative devolution. It ought to be able to choose local government rather than centralisation. We ought not to narrow the scope. We ought to widen the scope. That will be in the spirit of much that the right hon. Gentleman said and of the opportunities which we provide for the Assembly.

I think that we are opening up an area of debate. It is a large subject. It is one that, at this stage, the Committee will want to traverse. It is convenient that by the witching hour one should at any rate have opened up the subject for discussion, from which point it can be continued perhaps with more likelihood of a happy outcome, on a later occasion.

Mr. Prior: On a point of order, Mr. Armstrong. I said about an hour and ten minutes ago that I felt that we should make a start on the amendment and see how we got on and that after deciding how far we would get I would not expect the Committee to sit too late. The time has come when I should ask the Committee to report progress and ask leave to sit again.

To report Progress and ask leave to sit again.—[Mr. Thompson.]

Committee report Progress; to sit again tomorrow.

Argentina (Sporting Contacts)

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—[Mr. Thompson.]

12.5 am

Mr. John Carlisle (Luton, West): I am most grateful to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for allowing this debate to take place, and to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland for giving the House the chance, shortly after the witching hour, of hearing an important and topical subject that has been aired before in this place and outside. I am especially grateful to my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for being in his place this evening and for his great interest and foresight in the subject that I am about to raise. It is his maiden speech upon it in an Adjournment debate and I wish him the best of fortune in his recent appointment.

British participation in the World Cup has been aired in this place and outside since the Falkland Islands crisis began many miles from this place and since the emergency debate that took place on 3 April, when the subject was raised, perhaps somewhat unwittingly, by my right hon. Friend the Member for Surbiton (Sir N. Fisher). My right hon. Friend said that one sanction that could be used against Argentina in a terrible and unfortunate crisis was that of sport. He suggested that that sanction could be used in the forthcoming World Cup. I feel it right that we should debate the issue and the Government's attitude to Argentine and British participation in a great sporting contest.

Since the crisis began there has been an enormous amount of media reaction and speculation on whether the British teams of England, Scotland and Northern Ireland should take part. I and many of my hon. Friends have been heartened by the attitude adopted by the Government and expressed by my hon. Friend and my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister. They have not wavered in their opinion that the British teams should go to Spain and take part in a wonderful competition. No doubt has been expressed about that. I am particularly pleased about that, because the House will know that since I entered this place I have been trying to divorce the attitude of Governments from sport and trying to keep politics away from sporting participation.

The Government seem to have adopted an interesting change of policy since the Moscow Olympics. They are now allowing sporting associations to make their own decisions. Many hon. Members, including my hon. Friend the Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro) and the hon. Member for West Stirlingshire (Mr. Canavan), have asked several questions on this issue and the Government have not wavered from their decision to allow the teams to go, and, perhaps more importantly, not to put any pressure upon the respective football associations. I express the hope and desire that my hon. Friend will express no change of heart on the part of the Government. He will realise like many others that sporting boycotts rarely achieve what they set out to do. If history is to be taken note of, it is a fact that sporting boycotts in the past have probably harmed those who have tried to inflict them upon others rather than those for whom they have been intended. I speak in passing about South-Africa, where sporting boycotts have had little effect on the Government's attitude.

Since the Falkland controversy arose I have sought the opinions of others, especially those of Service men, who are supporting our cause as members of the task force, which is many miles from this place. There is no doubt that those who are serving us so gloriously and courageously in the south Atlantic are very much in favour of British participation in the competition. They realise, as do others, that it is a glorious chance to exhibit British patriotism and skill on the sporting field and to show some international co-operation, which we have lacked in the political arena but which sport has always provided.

To those who say that some members of our task force might feel that while they are fighting for their country it is not right that we should send sportsmen out to fight on the sporting field, I would say that their anxiety is not shared by those in the task force. The messages that many hon. Members receive through their constituents is that the men and women fighting on our behalf are as anxious as we are to have information about the sporting prowess of our nationals. They have especially requested video films of the end of the football season and have shown a great interest in what is going on in Britain. They will be most disappointed if we pull out of the World Cup.

Let us never forget that, in this argument, we are the innocents. We are fighting against an aggressor who used military force to take over a part of British sovereign territory, and many people would be very perplexed if it were believed to be appropriate to put pressure on the football associations to withdraw. We have nothing to be ashamed of in this dispute and our footballers will have nothing to be ashamed of if and when they go to Spain.

Another understandable fear that has been expressed is about the way that our fans might behave in Spain, especially if hostilities continue. I shall not dwell on that subject because I pay tribute to my hon. Friend for the pamphlet that he produced and his real attempts to lessen the effect of spectator behaviour in the competition. I understand his fears, which are justified because of the way that British fans have behaved during the past few years. I also acknowledge the anxiety and fear that, if Argentina was competing alongside British teams and if British teams should play against Argentina, some trouble would occur on the terraces. Those fears are fully justified, but I do not believe that there is any justification for a British team to withdraw from the competition because it may happen.

We must inevitably talk about a hypothetical position, so we must begin to tread dangerous ground. It is to be hoped that Scotland will get through to the second round, when it would be the first of the home countries to meet Argentina. If hostilities are still in progress no hon. Member or any British person could envisage a Scottish, English or Northern Irish team running on to the same field as an Argentine team. We hope desperately that the position will change before then. I pay tribute to the English Football Association and especially to its secretary, Ted Croker, who seems to be equal to the decision that he may have to take on the morning of that game. My hon. Friend the Member for Dumfries and the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Small Heath (Mr. Howell) also believe that it is unthinkable that British teams should run on to the same field as an Argentine team if hostilities are continuing.

In that case I understand that it would be up to FIFA to make its own decision. Perhaps that might not be a bad thing. If there is a disappointment, it is that our world

partners in soccer and our European partners have not come out in full support of our own ideas, and against Argentina.

I fully appreciate their understandable efforts to divorce politics from sport. Nobody has tried as hard as I have to keep politics away from sport. But it should be recorded that we are somewhat disappointed that our European partners have seen fit to make no comment on this situation. Should such a situation arise, FIFA would be under great pressure. My personal view—I do not expect the Minister to agree—is that the onus would be on FIFA to expel the aggressor and to allow the competition to go ahead.

There will be absolutely nothing to be gained by withdrawal of the British teams now, or for any pressure to be applied by the British Government on the teams to withdraw. The Argentines would take no notice whatever of any move that we make and we would have no advantage in the competition or in the fight against Argentina in the Falkland Islands. A military junta consisting of three men in a closed room is hardly likely to take notice of a democratic decision taken by the electorate of this country. Such a decision would, I suppose, in some people's eyes be a patriotic gesture, but it would be ignored by Argentina and in no way would it assist our efforts to remove the aggressor from the islands.

Sport is a great healer. It cuts across all politics and many international situations. It is a prowess that can be achieved by individuals and by teams in a spirit that is prevalent, and notable, for us in this country and all those in the free world. I believe that the World Cup will give the opportunity to millions to see young men competing against each other in the highest spirit of the game. Many of those millions will have no concern about what they might consider as being a small squabble between two warring nations. They might be sympathetic to the British dilemma, but that sympathy would not go far even if we were to withdraw from the competition.

We owe it to the men of the task force and to the men of the nation to allow the players to go to Spain unimpeded to compete in the competition and to win as many games as they can. I trust that one of them—I hope that it is the English team, and I make no apology for saying that—will return with a trophy for the sideboard to show that English patriotism, skill and sportsmanship means much in the world.

I hope that my hon. Friend will reinforce the view that he has stated, that my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has stated, and that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland stated only yesterday, that we shall allow the British teams to compete and, I hope, win.

12.20 am

The Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr. Neil Macfarlane): I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Luton, West (Mr. Carlisle) for giving me the opportunity to end recent press speculation and to place clearly on the record, once again, the Government's views on our participation in the World Cup.

I remind the House that, on 21 April, in answer to a question from the hon. Member for West Stirlingshire (Mr. Canavan) I said:

"There is no question of a boycott."

In answer to further questions I added that

(Mr. Neil Macfarlane)

"as matters now stand, we have no objection to British teams taking part in international competitions where Argentina may also be represented."—[*Official Report*, 21 April 1982; Vol. 22, c. 258-9.]

I added that the position would be kept under constant review in the light of changing circumstances.

On 19 May, in answer to a question from the hon. Member for West Lothian (Mr. Dalyell), I repeated the Government's view that no objection was seen to participation in the World Cup finals. I also made it clear on that occasion to my hon. Friend the Member for Luton, West that I had put no pressure on the three British football associations to withdraw.

It is the Government's policy to discourage all sporting contact with Argentina, either here or in that country at representative, club or individual level. Outside these two countries we see no objection to British teams or individuals competing in any international events where Argentina may be represented. This policy applies to all sporting events.

There are a number of reasons for this stance. It is the Argentines who are the aggressors and who stand condemned in the eyes of the world through United Nations resolution S02. We in the United Kingdom are the innocent party and, as I have said on several previous occasions, I feel that it would be grossly unfair to penalise our sportsmen and women by denying them the right to participate in international competition abroad simply because the guilty party, Argentina, does not withdraw from such competition. Certainly, Argentina has so far given no indication that its football team will not be going to Spain.

In addition, as I have said before, there must be many millions of people in this country who would think it strange if our teams withdrew from the World Cup because of the actions of Argentina, which is solely responsible for the battle of the Falklands.

As several hon. Members have indicated before, there would be no problem if the Argentine team had been, or were to be, banned from participation. My hon. Friend touched on that point. This is a decision which only the Federation Internationale de Football Associations could take. Its Brazilian President, Dr. Havalange, has already stated that no such ban on the World Cup holders will be made.

My hon. Friend has criticised UEFA for taking no action with FIFA. That is entirely a matter for our own home football associations who are members of those organisation. What debate might have gone on inside UEFA—or, indeed, within FIFA itself if the matter had been raised by Mr. Harry Cavan, chairman of the Northern Ireland Football Association, but also a senior vice-president of FIFA—I cannot say, because I have not been privy to any discussions within those organisations. This is a matter in which Government have no locus whatsoever.

I must emphasise that however the Government view this situation, the final decision on whether to participate in the World Cup finals is one for the football authorities, and their players. Certainly the authorities have made clear their wish to participate in the World Cup finals.

It has, however, been reported in some papers that a few individual footballers—and perhaps one or two

administrators—have queried the morality of participation. Again, should any player feel that strongly on the issue, the decision whether to go must rest entirely with him.

Public opinion on this issue, like so many others, is difficult to gauge accurately. Certainly, there are indicators such as the recent poll by a Scottish newspaper, which showed that 90 per cent. of those asked favoured their teams' participation in the World Cup. Like my hon. Friend, I have had—as one would expect—much correspondence on the matter. Virtually everyone who has written to me has favoured our teams going. Some have made the very valid point that, bearing in mind the love of football by the average Argentine citizen, any withdrawal by the United Kingdom teams would be greeted with great joy in Argentina and be regarded by them as a moral victory over us and presented by the Argentine Government as an indication of world opinion against Great Britain.

Some of the letters that I have had come from people with husbands or sons in our task force now engaged so heroically and perilously in action in and around the Falklands. I would like to quote from one letter from a lady whose husband is on one of our warships. She mentioned how many of her husband's colleagues enjoy their football and support our international teams and who would be saddened by any withdrawal from the World Cup. She said:

"Argentina must be gloating over the fact that with the possibility of England withdrawing, they may possibly retain the World Cup (though not the Falkland Islands). As the wife of a sailor serving his country, I ask you please to consider these facts".

Another letter says:

"What a boost to the spirits of our armed forces if they won, and if not, they would have had a go."

A third commented that a boycott

"May even be misconstrued as guilt or misrepresented as action taken by FIFA against the aggressor."

I return to press speculation, to which my hon. Friend referred. There have been some inferences that, despite my public statements, I have been quietly pressing our football authorities behind the scenes to withdraw from the World Cup. This I emphatically deny. I am in constant touch with the football authorities about the World Cup and a whole range of other footballing matters, and have been since I took office in this post last September. In answer to their questions, I have told them simply that the Government see no objection to their going to Spain. Indeed, as my hon. Friend was kind enough to mention, only three days ago a leaflet of guidance for people travelling to the World Cup was published and distributed under cover of a press statement from me, demonstrating that my Department has gone to some lengths to tackle the potential problem of hooliganism in Spain. My officials have visited all the centres where first round matches are to be played and advised local officials of the preventive measures that we take in Britain. I have visited Madrid for talks with my opposite number.

I have mentioned public opinion in this country. There is also the matter of Spanish public opinion in relation to its effect upon those British supporters who will be going to Spain in support of their teams and in relation to some of the 4 million British people who travel to Spain every year for their holidays.

It has been reported that, because of Spain's cultural and historical links with Latin America, and for other

reasons, public opinion in Spain is running high in connection with the Falklands issue in sympathy with Argentina. For this reason, I think that there must be some increased risk of incidents resulting from contacts between a variety of visiting football fans. We have, however, received assurances from the Spanish Minister for Culture and her Secretary of State for Sport, from the Royal Organising Committee for the World Cup, from regional civil governors, chiefs of police, stadia authorities and so on, that the British teams and their fans are most welcome and that they will enjoy the traditional hospitality which Spain offers our people.

Government business permitting, I intend to be in Spain for a few days of the first phase of the World Cup and will keep in close contact with our three football associations.

To conclude—I repeat that the final decision on whether our three teams participate in the World Cup finals lies solely with the football authorities, and their players. The Government see no objection to their taking part. I hope that this statement will end all future speculation and I am sure that the House will join me in wishing our three teams great success.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at twenty-seven minutes past Twelve o'clock.

Q26. **Dr. Mawhinney** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for 27 May.

Q27. **Mr. Stanbrook** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 27 May.

Q28. **Mr. Myles** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 27 May.

Q29. **Mr. Best** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 27 May.

Q30. **Mr. Christopher Price** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 27 May.

Q31. **Mr. Newens** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 27 May.

Q33. **Mr. John Carlisle** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 27 May.

Q34. **Mr. Dover** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 27 May.

Q35. **Mr. Delwyn Williams** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 27 May.

Q36. **Mr. Sheerman** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 27 May.

Q37. **Mr. Arthur Davidson** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 27 May.

Q38. **Mr. Montgomery** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for 27 May.

Q39. **Mr. Alan Clark** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 27 May.

Q40. **Mr. Duffy** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for 27 May.

Q42. **Mr. Meacher** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for 27 May.

The Prime Minister: This morning I presided at a meeting of the Cabinet and had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in the House, I shall be having further meetings later today.

Falkland Islands

Q13. **Mr. Dalyell** asked the Prime Minister if she will make a statement on the latest position in relation to the Falkland Islands.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave earlier today to my hon. Friend the Member for Brigg and Scunthorpe (Mr. Brown).

Mr Meacher asked the Prime Minister if she will list each of the peace proposals over the Falklands that have been put forward since the beginning of April and indicate which party tabled them, the date they were put forward and the grounds for their rejection in each case.

The Prime Minister: In advance of the debate on 20 May, the Government made available to hon. Members the draft interim agreement which had been presented to the United Nations Secretary-General on 17 May on behalf of Her Majesty's Government. As I said in that debate, the earlier proposals belong to those who devised them, and they are no longer on the negotiating table. At present, therefore, I cannot add to the information about them which has already been conveyed to the House.

European Community (Trade)

Q25. **Mr. Teddy Taylor** asked the Prime Minister on how many occasions trade matters have been discussed at meetings of the European Economic Community Heads of Government since 1979.

The Prime Minister: As may be seen from my regular statements to the House following meetings of the European Council, economic problems both within the Community and in the world at large have been a major concern in the discussions with my Community colleagues since 1979. Trade matters are inevitably bound up with the discussions.

Factory Closures

Q32. **Mr. Campbell-Savours** asked the Prime Minister how many hon. Members she has seen on matters relating to factory closures since she last answered oral questions; and how many jobs were expected to be lost in the closures mentioned.

The Prime Minister: I have had no such meetings since 25 May.

Nationalised Industries (Privatisation)

Q41. **Mr. Renton** asked the Prime Minister whether she is satisfied with the co-ordination between Departments dealing with the privatisation of the nationalised industries.

The Prime Minister: Yes, but I am always ready to consider suggestions for improvements in the arrangements for handling this important area of Government policy.

"Social Trends"

Mr. Field asked the Prime Minister how many copies of "Social Trends 1979" were issued free to Government Departments; how many copies were purchased by Government Departments; how many copies have been otherwise sold; and what are the corresponding figures for "Social Trends 1980" and "Social Trends 1981".

The Prime Minister: The information is as follows:

Year	Issued free to Government Departments	Purchased by Government Departments	Others sold
1979	1,248	77	4,787
1980	1,002	75	4,501
1981	-	464	4,494