

LOBBY BRIEFING

time: 11.00 date: 10.6.82

PRIME MINISTER'S DAY

The Prime Minister is attending the NATO Summit in Bonn and will be returning to London this evening.

The timetable for the Summit is:

1000 am	Opening Ceremony in Bundestag.
1105 am	Session in Federal Chancellory 'NATO Room' (the PM will speak 3rd or 4th).
1310 pm	Family photograph.
1315	Lunch hosted by Chancellor Schmidt and a separate lunch for Foreign Ministers hosted by Herr Genscher.
1515	Session in Federal Chancellory 'NATO Room'.
1700	Session ends.

The Prime Minister will then hold a press conference at about 5.45pm followed by interviews and will return to London this evening at about 8.00pm local time.

IN THE HOUSE

At 3.15pm the Home Secretary will be in the House for Questions.

At 3.30pm there will be Business Questions.

STATEMENT

At about 3.45pm there will be a statement by the Defence Secretary.

SUPPLY DEBATE

At about 4.00pm there will be a supply debate on National Health Service Pay with Mr Fowler opening.

PUBLICATIONS

At 3.30pm Report of the Parole Board for 1981 (CFRs yesterday).

At 3.30pm Annual Report of the Keeper of the Public Record Office 1981.

ANSWER OF INTEREST

No 74 Written 3.30 pm: Mr Mark Wolfson to ask the S/S Employment whether the Government has yet reached a decision about the future of the bank holiday on the first Monday in May.

ODA have announced the allocation of £30,000 to the Red Cross Society for relief measures as a consequence of cyclones in Honduras and Nicaragua.

UN DISARMAMENT TALKS AT NEW YORK CITY

A reminder to the lobby that seats are available on the flight to New York next Tuesday and bookings should be made as soon as possible.

NATO SUMMIT

We said the meeting was of a political nature. Member countries were all represented by their Heads of Government or State and it was not usual for the Defence Secretary to attend. The meeting would reaffirm the principles of NATO. In her speech the Prime Minister will thank them for the support given to the UK on the Falklands, will concentrate on the strength of the NATO alliance and the longest period of peace and stress that members should be aware of becoming complacent as witnessed by world events in the recent weeks.

FALKLANDS

We did not expect the Defence Secretary's statement on the Argentine attacks on landing craft on Tuesday would go into any detail on casualties as complete details were not yet fully known. We were not aware of any statements by MoD today.

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We were aware that the MoD had been criticised last night because they could not give details of the operations but said that although MoD did not know the full extent of the damage they did make it clear that the attacks were more serious than previous ones. We reminded them that MoD have been consistent in not giving operational details. We explained the great difficulty of striking an acceptable balance between security and providing detailed information and informing the next of kin. We stressed that the censored press reports, in this case identifying 3 ships, had been received from the Task Force putting MoD in very difficult position of not being able to give precise details.

We understood that casualties and damage were scattered which hindered any assessment of the attack. There was also the problem of press reports of Argentine claims of their successes.

We emphasised that as the next of kin were still being informed we were genuinely not in a position to give details.

We said we wouldn't expect Tuesday's attacks to delay and UK attack operations. We would not comment on suggestions that our air defences were inadequate but drew the lobby's attention to the speed of the attack and the large element of luck which played a big part.

We understood that in the Prime Minister's talks with President Reagan the possibility of US help being made available was discussed although there were logistical difficulties but we could not confirm any details. We thought it likely that the President would consider such help but declined to go into details.

Questioned about estimates of the cost of the Falklands crisis, we said we were not aware of any estimates and said the Treasury are not keeping close monitoring of current costs and reminded them that there was no shorter term cost problem, that the replacement costs of capital assets would in any case be spread over future years, and there were contingency reserves available. We steered the lobby away from the suggestion that there would be a mini-Budget this summer and pointed out that the Chief Secretary had said at the outset that if we do exceed the contingency reserves then measures to meet the cost would be consistent with the Government's economic policy. We did not regard it necessary to give an estimate of costs at this stage and said the next public expenditure would not start for a few months.

Following up the Prime Minister's reference yesterday in her US TV interviews to bearing the cost of going-it-alone, we suggested that the extra cost would not be so great.

MAY DAY HOLIDAY

We guided the lobby not to expect any change.

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