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CC(82) 22nd
Conclusions

COPY NO 79

CABINET

CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the Cabinet
held at 10 Downing Street on

TUESDAY 4 MAY 1982

at 10.30 am

PRESENT

The Rt Hon Margaret Thatcher MP
Prime Minister

The Rt Hon William Whitelaw MP
Secretary of State for the Home Department

The Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey Howe QC MP
Chancellor of the Exchequer

The Rt Hon Sir Keith Joseph MP
Secretary of State for Education and Science

The Rt Hon John Nott MP
Secretary of State for Defence

The Rt Hon Michael Heseltine MP
Secretary of State for the Environment

The Rt Hon Nicholas Edwards MP
Secretary of State for Wales

The Rt Hon John Biffen MP
Lord President of the Council

The Rt Hon Norman Fowler MP
Secretary of State for Social Services

The Rt Hon Baroness Young
Lord Privy Seal

The Rt Hon Lord Hailsham
Lord Chancellor

The Rt Hon Francis Pym MP
Secretary of State for Foreign and
Commonwealth Affairs

The Rt Hon James Prior MP
Secretary of State for Northern Ireland

The Rt Hon Peter Walker MP
Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food

The Rt Hon George Younger MP
Secretary of State for Scotland

The Rt Hon Patrick Jenkin MP
Secretary of State for Industry

The Rt Hon David Howell MP
Secretary of State for Transport

The Rt Hon Leon Brittan QC MP
Chief Secretary, Treasury

The Rt Hon Nigel Lawson MP
Secretary of State for Energy

SECRET

The Rt Hon Norman Tebbit MP
Secretary of State for Employment

The Rt Hon Cecil Parkinson MP
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster
and Paymaster General

The Rt Hon Lord Cockfield
Secretary of State for Trade

THE FOLLOWING WERE ALSO PRESENT

The Rt Hon Sir Michael Havers QC MP
Attorney General

The Rt Hon Michael Jopling MP
Parliamentary Secretary, Treasury

Admiral of the Fleet Sir Terence Lewin
Chief of the Defence Staff

SECRETARIAT

Sir Robert Armstrong
Mr R L Wade-Gery
Mr R L L Facer

S U B J E C T

FALKLAND ISLANDS

SECRET

FALKLAND
ISLANDS

Previous
Reference:
CC(82) 21st
Conclusions,
Minute 2

The Cabinet reviewed the state of the dispute over the Falkland Islands.

The Cabinet's discussion and conclusions reached are recorded separately.

Cabinet Office

4 May 1982

SECRET*Sir R. Armstrong*
(BV)

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CABINET

LIMITED CIRCULATION ANNEX

CC(82) 22nd Conclusions

Tuesday 4 May 1982 at 10.30 am

FALKLAND
ISLANDSPrevious
Reference:
CC(82) 21st
Conclusions,
Minute 2

The Cabinet reviewed the state of the dispute over the Falkland Islands.

THE FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH SECRETARY said that he had visited Washington and New York over the weekend for discussions with the United States Secretary of State, Mr Haig, and the United Nations Secretary General, Senor Perez de Cuellar; he had also seen the current President of the United Nations Security Council, Mr Ling Qing of China. There was a general recognition in the United States that the strategy of applying diplomatic, economic and military pressure on Argentina was correct. There was strong support for the United Kingdom in American public opinion. The United States Administration were prepared to consider further economic measures against Argentina, which would have not only an immediate impact on Argentina but a helpful effect on the attitude of the United Kingdom's European partners. But the United States had a very strong interest in an early resolution of the dispute before the crisis deepened still further, and Mr Haig had not abandoned his efforts to seek a diplomatic solution or his emphasis on the need for a new initiative. They had discussed a range of ideas, including some which had originated from the Peruvian Government. He had made clear that Britain was prepared to discuss proposals for a settlement provided that Argentine forces were withdrawn from the Islands and that the outcome of negotiations affecting sovereignty was not prejudged. The ideas put forward by Senor Perez de Cuellar were vague; but he might, as a Peruvian, have a useful role to play when a suitable opportunity occurred. It was important to make a constructive diplomatic effort, even if it was unlikely to succeed: international opinion should be left in no doubt that the United Kingdom really wished to secure a peaceful solution. Although it was difficult to predict the Argentines' reactions, the signs were that recent British military successes had had the effect of increasing their determination.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DEFENCE said that the sinking by a British submarine of the cruiser General Belgrano, with the probable loss of many Argentine sailors, would need careful presentation. At the time of the Argentine invasion only luck and the skill of British Servicemen had prevented the loss of HMS Endurance and casualties to British forces. The overriding concern was the protection of British

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forces. Although Argentina had been warned on 23 April that any approach by Argentine warships or military aircraft, which could amount to a threat to interfere with the mission of British forces in the South Atlantic, would encounter the appropriate response, general authority to attack Argentine warships constituting such a threat outside the Total Exclusion Zone had not been given until the day after Argentine forces had launched an attack on the fleet. Further military action in the next weeks might be necessary in order to reduce the difficulties of an opposed landing on the Islands, should one become necessary.

THE CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE STAFF briefed the Cabinet on the military situation.

THE PRIME MINISTER, summing up the discussion, said that there was general support for the view that further diplomatic initiatives were needed with the dual aim of securing the withdrawal of Argentine troops and maintaining broad international support for the United Kingdom position. There was wide admiration for the professionalism and skill which the Armed Services had shown in the recent engagements.

The Cabinet -

Took note.

Cabinet Office

4 May 1982

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