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CONFIDENTIALMEETING OF INFORMATION GROUP ON THE FALKLANDS4.15 PM SUNDAY 16 MAY 1982

Present:

B Ingham - No 10
P Brazier - FCO
N Taylor - MoD
R Westbrook - FCO

Today's OD(SA) meeting with the two Ambassadors is being presented as a review of the state of negotiations; it is not a meeting to decide on 'war or peace'. On Tuesday the Cabinet would be brought up-to-date on the Government's strategy. The two Ambassadors were due to return to the USA tomorrow.

MoD reported further raids on Port Stanley airport in the last few days as a continuing enforcement of the TEZ. The very successful raid on Pebble Island was the largest bombardment to date but did not endanger any of the islanders and the casualties were very minor. Sixty men took part, but this and other operational details are not yet public knowledge. The military harassment will continue but MoD had no information of the timing of future raids. MoD hope that trials of the black and white scanners will be carried out this afternoon and that an ENG link could be arranged.

The meeting welcomed the improved news presentation by BBC and ITN over the weekend due to availability of filmed material. O'Hanrahan and Nicholson in recent days have not been able to file because of security restrictions during operations. In their absence the Lieutenant Commander has been giving radio reports.

MoD reported a moderate success from the meeting with Editors yesterday.

It was agreed that although news presentation has for some weeks been restricted by the speed of assembly of the Task Force, there is now evidence that press operations had definitely improved.

MoD said they were now considering press presentation for the event of a landing, in particular arranging a direct radio link back to the MoD.

It was not known whether Ian McDonald would be back off leave on Monday.

With regard to EC sanctions, this evening's Foreign Office Ministers' meeting to discuss renewal should be divorced from the Budget Mandate, on which our position is that in replying to the Thorn/Tindemans proposals we are looking for a longer term settlement although there is, however, a mechanism by which the Commission would produce a solution and the UK might conceivably consider it.

SHEENAGH WALLACE
17 May, 1982

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