



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2HB

Telephone 01-218 ^{2111/3} (Direct Dialling)

01-218 9000 (Switchboard)

MO 5/21

28th April 1982

Dear John,

NR ^{29.}/₄

FALKLAND ISLANDS

/ You asked this morning for a passage on military matters for inclusion in the Prime Minister's speech tomorrow. I attach a suggested contribution. It has not been formally cleared with the FCO but our assessment is that they would not dissent from it. A copy goes to John Holmes, David Wright and Jim Buckley.

Yours ever
Nick Evans

(N H R EVANS)

A J Coles Esq

SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER

I turn now to the military steps which the Government has taken.

Our military response to the unprovoked aggression by Argentina against the Falkland Islands and South Georgia has been both restrained and consistent. We assembled a formidable task force in a short space of time and despatched it to the South Atlantic. The pressure placed on Argentina by this action was, of course, complemented by other measures which we have taken, and encouraged others to take, on the trade, economic and diplomatic fronts.

It is our view that Argentina is unlikely to comply with the Security Council Resolution without the application of military pressure. Our first step was to declare a Maritime Exclusion Zone from 12th April. This has been enforced since that time against Argentine warships and naval auxiliaries. Our second step was to issue a warning to the Argentine authorities on 23rd April that any approach by Argentine warships or military aircraft which could amount to a threat to interfere with the mission of the British Forces in the South Atlantic would encounter the appropriate response. On 25th April we exercised our right of self-defence under Article 51 of the UN Charter to repossess South Georgia - but with the minimum of force consistent with achieving our objective. I am very glad that no lives were lost in that operation.

Two lives have been lost, however. The first was the Petty Officer killed in one of HMS HERMES helicopters which ditched in the sea on Friday. The second was that of the Argentine killed in an incident on South Georgia on the 26th April, following the surrender of the Argentine forces. I heartily regret both these deaths. The Argentine Government have been informed through intermediaries of the incident on South Georgia and, in accordance with the provisions of the Third Geneva Convention, a Board of Inquiry has been convened to conduct an urgent investigation of the circumstances. It would not be appropriate for me to comment further until the Board has concluded its investigation.

The Total Exclusion Zone, which was announced yesterday, is another step in the gradually increasing pressure which we have been applying. The Total Exclusion Zone has the same geographical boundaries as the Military Exclusion Zone which took effect on 12th April. The new Zone will apply from the 30th April to all ships and aircraft, whether military or civil, operating in support of the illegal occupation of the Falkland Islands. At the same time Port Stanley airport will be closed. A complete embargo will be placed on all traffic supporting the occupation forces of Argentina. International maritime and aviation authorities have been informed, as appropriate, of the imposition of the Zone. Our aim continues to be to bring home to the Argentinians the folly of their actions in invading the Falkland Islands. If they choose to challenge our authority in that Zone the responsibility will be theirs.

Mr Speaker, the rt hon Member the Leader of the Opposition asked on Tuesday that we should not take any further steps in the escalation of military matters. I said then that I stood by the UN Security Council Resolution 502 and the UN Charter. I hold to that statement. It is not we who are escalating this crisis. Its de-escalation can be achieved very simply by Argentina withdrawing its forces from the Falkland Islands. For our part we are making our own decisions and we are not the prisoners of military timetables. But we do not intend to give the Argentine Government any comfort by reducing the pressure we are now applying to achieve our objective: the end of an illegal occupation.