

PRIME MINISTER

The following are short notes on some of the speakers in the debate for whose speeches you were not present.

SIR A. KERSHAW

His main point was that given the background there was nothing the Government could have done in the period immediately preceding the invasion to prevent it. We had neither a strategic nor an economic nor a political interest in protecting the Falklands; only a moral one in the protection of our "kith and kin" against the evil government of the Argentine. Moreover, we did not really understand what we were up against in the Argentine military. They were a "mafia in fine uniforms". There was an impossible dilemma. You cannot negotiate with such people but if we had not negotiated there would have been an international uproar. Nor could we have despatched a task force earlier than we did: it would have been seen as provocation.

Now he said we have two choices. Fortress Falklands or evacuation. Half measures, e.g. "internationalisation" amounted to surrender in the long term. For the moment Fortress Falklands was the only possible policy.

MR. T. DALYELL

He opened by praising the drafting of the Report and saying that he did not wish to accuse the Committee of "a cover up". There was a brief passage in which he complained about the Franks appendix which attacked some of the contentions. In particular he said that the behaviour of the Argentine crew of the Hercules which landed at Stanley on 11 March was incompatible with their having made an emergency landing.

The main burden of his comments was to amplify his "cynical and unpleasant" view of events leading up to the campaign. He alleged:

- (i) that your contention that the Falklands crisis "came out of the blue" was untrue. In support of this he claimed that your 3 March request for contingency plans and the 5 March (paragraph 147) paper by Mr. Ure recording that you wished the next Defence Committee paper on the Falklands to have civil and military contingency plans attached were incompatible with the crisis having come out of the blue. You had asked the Defence Secretary how long it would take to get frigates to the Falklands; you could have had them there by 28 March. He also repeated the line he used in Questions on 23 December that "the barmaids of Gibraltar" knew more than the Prime Minister about the deployment of the Fort Austin to the South Atlantic.
  
- (ii) He asked why you did not follow up your request for contingency plans as forcefully as he would expect, for example by arranging a meeting of OD during the following week. He attributed this either to the turning of a blind eye to the warnings about the Argentine intentions on the grounds that responding to them was too expensive, or to a decision to lay low and permit an Argentine encroachment in order to "savour the discomfort of the Foreign Office". He attributed these alleged attitudes to the malign influence of Ian!

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- (iii) He accused you of leading the Argentines on to the punch by taking a hard line after leading them to believe that you were going to take a soft line.

Mr. Dalyell also spoke at some length on his familiar territory about the sinking of the Belgrano. He cited this as conclusive evidence that you were not interested in peace. He claimed "that an honourable peace could have been had for the asking". Now it was the Argentine which had the moral upper hand and we who faced continual harrassment.

/ MR. AMERY

MR. AMERY

Julian Amery said that the Report was "a devastating indictment" of this Government and past ones. We had had two options:

- (i) to surrender sovereignty on the best terms we could get;
- (ii) to defend the Islands.

Successive Governments had willed the end that the wishes of the Islanders should be paramount but none of them had been willing to will the means. We could have done so. By lengthening the runway at Stanley, and stationing a squadron there, we could have defended the Islands at a fraction of the present cost. Instead we had negotiated but negotiations without a possible conclusion cannot succeed. Lord Carrington had mistaken "diplomacy for foreign policy". Because we had ceded the principle of negotiations of sovereignty the Treasury had been reluctant to spend money on the Falklands, MOD was reluctant to defend them and the Falkland Islands Company repatriated their profits.

Mr. Amery criticised what he saw as the excessive reliance on intelligence reports about the imminence of the invasion. Invasions, he said, are not like grouse shooting; they do not wait until summer. Surprise is the weapon of dictators. We should have been prepared for anything when Galtieri came to power.

He concluded by praising your leadership during the campaign.

MR. HOOLEY

He said that there was a conflict between the interests of the 1800 Islanders and the 55 million living in the UK. Although we had continually proclaimed the principle that the Islanders'

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wishes were paramount we had undermined our own negotiating position by our actions. These included the run-down of the Navy, the sale of INVINCIBLE, our willingness to sell arms to the Argentines, the rejection of Shackleton and most important, the British Nationality Act. He then attacked the Falklanders for their "white colonial settler mentality" that the UK owed them a living. We should give them an absolute right to British nationality, generous financial compensation and a free option of destination when we reached an accommodation with Argentina. We owed them no more than that. He concluded with the argument that we were isolated in the UN and had no international support for our non-negotiation lines; we should use the machinery of the UN to extricate ourselves.

T.F.

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