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**Background on The Franks Report, 1983**

... I attach a short note on the Franks report prepared by the Research Analysts. Its formal title was the "*Falklands Islands Review: Report of a Committee of Privy Councillors*". It was chaired by Lord Franks, former civil servant and ambassador to Washington. It was an official enquiry set up by the government of Baroness Thatcher. The note outlines its terms of reference, proceedings and conclusions.

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## FALKLAND ISLANDS REVIEW ("THE FRANKS REPORT")

1. On 6 July 1982, in a Written Answer to a Parliamentary Question, the Prime Minister announced that, following consultation with the leaders of the Opposition parties, the Government had decided to appoint a committee of Privy Counsellors under the Chairmanship of Lord Franks, with the following terms of reference: "To review the way in which the responsibilities of Government in relation to the Falkland Islands and their Dependencies were discharged in the period leading up to the Argentine invasion of the Falkland Islands on 2 April 1982, taking account of all such factors in previous years as are relevant; and to report." After a debate the House of Commons resolved on 8 July to approve the Government's decision.
2. The Committee of six Privy Counsellors met for the first time on 26 July and held 42 meetings. The final report (officially known as the *Falkland Islands Review - Report of a Committee of Privy Counsellors*, but soon better known as "The Franks Report" after the chairman) was published on 18 January 1983 and presented to Parliament on 25 January.
3. In order to identify relevant factors in previous years, the Committee examined the history of the dispute between the UK and Argentina since 1965, the date that the issue was first brought formally to international attention. They were provided with relevant papers from all Government Departments concerned, in particular all relevant papers that the Prime Minister personally saw from May 1979 to 2 April 1982; all relevant Cabinet and Cabinet Committee papers and minutes from 1965; detailed FCO and MOD documents from 1965; documents from the Treasury, DOE, Home Office and Department of Trade; every relevant report from the intelligence agencies from January 1981 to 2 April 1982 and numerous reports from previous years; every Joint Intelligence Organisation assessment on Argentina and the Falkland Islands since 1965 and all relevant minutes of meetings. In addition, all relevant FCO and MOD files for the first three months of 1982 were handed over, with files from previous years made available. Post-2 April 1982 intelligence reports were provided where they threw light on earlier events. The Committee also studied written evidence from a broad range of outside specialists. They held 30 sessions of oral evidence with Ministers and officials of the then government, with some Ministers of previous administrations including all Prime Ministers from 1965, and with a range of outside specialists.

### Conclusions of Report..

4. The Report addressed two central questions. First, could the Government have foreseen the invasion of 2 April? Secondly, could the Government have prevented the invasion?
- In answer to the first question, the Report concluded that the invasion could not have been foreseen. The Committee was satisfied that the evidence of the timing of the decision taken by the Argentine Junta to invade showed that the Government not only did not, but could not, have had earlier warning of the decision to invade.

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In answer to the second question, the Committee stressed that it needed to be considered in the context of all events since 1965. The Committee considered there were times when different decisions might have been taken, where fuller consideration of alternative courses of action might have been advantageous, and where the machinery of Government could have been better used. But, if the Government had acted differently in the ways indicated, it is impossible to judge what the impact would have been:

".....There is no reasonable basis for any suggestion - which would be purely hypothetical- that the invasion would have been prevented if the Government had acted in the ways indicated in our report. Taking account of these considerations, and of all the evidence we have received, we conclude that we would not be justified in attaching any criticism or blame to the present Government for the Argentine junta's decision to commit its act of unprovoked aggression in the invasion of the Falkland Islands on 2 April 1982."

5. The only specific recommendation made in the Report was a review of the Joint Intelligence Organisation. This resulted in a change of chairmanship of the JIC from the FCO to the Cabinet Office.

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