

Mr Speaker: With permission I wish to make a statement on the situation in the Falkland Islands. Over the past 24 hours the situation has become increasingly grave. There is now a real expectation that an Argentine attack against the Falkland Islands will take place very soon. It was for this reason that we sought an Emergency meeting of the Security Council yesterday and associated ourselves immediately with a request from the President of the Security Council that both Britain and Argentina should exercise restraint and refrain from the use or threat of force, and continue the search for a Diplomatic solution. There was no Argentine response to this: nor has the Argentine President responded to the many appeals that have been made to him to draw back from the use of force.

We are taking appropriate military and diplomatic measures to sustain our rights under international law and in accordance with the provisions of the UN Charter. But the House will not expect me to give details at this stage of the military steps we have taken to respond to the worsening situation. In the meantime we continue to hope that the Argentine Government even at this late stage will reconsider its rejection of the Diplomatic channel as a means for settling the differences between our two countries.