

the elderly, smash in the windows and thrive on a life of crime?' Every generation has its wreckers. There have been riots in other times, but our faith has always told us that one cannot sow the seeds of discontent on a stable society. They can flourish only if they find fertile ground. Our politics and policies must deny that fertile ground. Yes, of course, our political opponents will fight us – as soon as they stop fighting each other. But we have the mettle for that fight.

Heseltine won a standing ovation. He resigned from Margaret Thatcher's government in 1986 and challenged her for the leadership of the Tory Party in 1990. On the first ballot he won more votes than Mrs Thatcher and precipitated her downfall, but lost to John Major, whose Cabinet he subsequently joined.

MARGARET THATCHER

Cheltenham, 3 July 1982

'The Falklands Factor'

When Margaret Thatcher decided to send a task force of 10,000 men to recapture the Falkland Islands after they had been invaded by Argentina, she played for the highest stakes and won triumphantly. The British success was attributed to Mrs Thatcher's nerve and determination. The 'Iron Lady' of Soviet propaganda proved iron indeed. From being the least popular British prime minister of modern times, Mrs Thatcher became the new Boadicea, the embodiment of toughness and resolve.

The 'Falklands Factor', noted in this nationalistic speech to a rally of Conservative women, ensured that she won the general election of 1983, her second election victory.

Today we meet in the aftermath of the Falklands Battle. Our country has won a great victory and we are entitled to be proud. This nation had the resolution to do what it knew had to be done – to do what it knew was right.

We fought to show that aggression does not pay, and that the robber cannot be allowed to get away with his swag. We fought with the support of so many throughout the world: the Security Council, the Commonwealth, the European Community, and the United States. Yet we also fought alone – for we fought for our own people and for our own sovereign territory.

Now that it is all over, things cannot be the same again, for we have learnt something about ourselves – a lesson which we desperately needed to learn. When we started out, there were the waverers and the faint-hearts: the people who thought that Britain could no longer seize the initiative for herself; the people who thought we could no longer do the great things which we once did; and those who believed that our decline was irreversible – that we could never again be what we were. There were those who would not admit it – even perhaps some here today – people who would have strenuously denied the suggestion but – in their heart of hearts – they too had their secret fears that it was true: that Britain was no longer the nation that had built an Empire and ruled a quarter of the world.

Well, they were wrong. The lesson of the Falklands is that Britain has not changed and that this nation still has those sterling qualities which shine through our history. This generation can match their fathers and grandfathers in ability, in courage, and in resolution. We have not changed. When the demands of war and the dangers to our own people call us to arms – then we British are as we have always been – competent, courageous and resolute.

When called to arms – ah, that's the problem. It took the battle in the South Atlantic for the shipyards to adapt ships way ahead of time; for dockyards to refit merchantmen and cruise liners, to fix helicopter platforms, to convert hospital ships – all faster than was thought possible; it took the demands of war for every stop to be pulled out and every man and woman to do their best.

British people had to be threatened by foreign soldiers and British territory invaded and then – why then – the response was

incomparable. Yet why does it need a war to bring out our qualities and reassert our pride? Why do we have to be invaded before we throw aside our selfish aims and begin to work together as only we can work, and achieve as only we can achieve?

That really is the challenge we as a nation face today. We have to see that the spirit of the South Atlantic – the real spirit of Britain – is kindled not only by war but can now be fired by peace.

We have the first prerequisite. We know we can do it – we haven't lost the ability. That is the Falklands Factor. We have proved ourselves to ourselves. It is a lesson we must not now forget. Indeed, it is a lesson which we must apply to peace just as we have learnt it in war. The faltering and the self-doubt has given way to achievement and pride. We have the confidence and we must use it.

Just look at the Task Force as an object lesson. Every man had his own task to do and did it superbly. Officers and men, senior NCO and newest recruit – every one realized that his contribution was essential for the success of the whole. All were equally valuable – each was differently qualified. By working together, each was able to do more than his best. As a team they raised the average to the level of the best and by each doing his utmost together they achieved the impossible. That's an accurate picture of Britain at war – not yet of Britain at peace. But the spirit has stirred and the nation has begun to assert itself. Things are not going to be the same again.

ROBERT RUNCIE

London, 26 July 1982

'Our neighbours are indeed like us'

Although it continued to lose members during the 1970s and 1980s, the Church of England remained a powerful source of social criticism and often upset Conservative ministers.

Dr Robert Runcie (1921–), who won the Military Cross during the Second

World War, was appointed Archbishop of Canterbury by Margaret Thatcher but their relationship was uneasy. After her own triumphalism over victory in the Falklands war, she was said to be particularly upset by this muted and moderate sermon from Dr Runcie at a service of thanksgiving in St Paul's Cathedral, although she never commented publicly on her views of the sermon. Runcie dared to suggest that people were mourning Argentina as well as Britain – and that they should also be remembered in the nation's prayers.

Our hope as Christians is not fundamentally in man's naked goodwill and rationality. We believe that he can overcome the deadly selfishness of class or sect or race by discovering himself as a child of the universal God of love. When a man realizes that he is a beloved child of the Creator of all, then he is ready to see his neighbours in the world as brothers and sisters. That is one reason why those who dare to interpret God's will must never claim him as an asset for one nation or group rather than another. War springs from the love and loyalty which should be offered to God being applied to some God-substitute, one of the most dangerous being nationalism.

This is a dangerous world where evil is at work nourishing the mindless brutality which killed and maimed so many in this city last week. Sometimes, with the greatest reluctance, force is necessary to hold back the chaos which injustice and the irrational element in man threaten to make of the world. But having said that, all is not lost and there is hope. Even in the failure of war there are springs of hope. In that great war play by Shakespeare, Henry V says: 'There is some soul of goodness in things evil, would men observingly distill it out.' People are mourning on both sides of this conflict. In our prayers we shall quite rightly remember those who are bereaved in our own country and the relations of the young Argentinian soldiers who were killed. Common sorrow could do something to reunite those who were engaged in this struggle. A shared anguish can be a bridge of reconciliation. Our neighbours are indeed like us.

I have had an avalanche of letters and advice about this service.