



HMS Invincible leaving Portsmouth for the South Atlantic on April 5.

## Colleagues vilify Pym as split with Thatcher widens

By Anthony Bevens, Political Correspondent

Relations between the Prime Minister and Mr Francis Pym, her Foreign Secretary, have reached such a low ebb that some of Mrs Thatcher's senior ministerial colleagues have begun to vilify Mr Pym, in the most disparaging personal terms, in private Commons conversation, even with MPs of other parties.

It is stated that Mr Pym's insistence that in the end, no matter what casualties are suffered in the Falklands engagement with Argentine forces, negotiations will eventually have to take place with the junta, has severely annoyed Mrs Thatcher. The Pym line, her Cabinet friends argue, smacks of sell-out; and she will have nothing to do with it.

For she insists that the crisis has reached the point of no return, and she is thinking in terms of a long-term plan for the development and diversification of the islands' economy; to eradicate the need for dependence on the mainland.

Last week the Prime Minister requested a meeting with Lord Shackleton, the Labour peer who was commissioned by the Government to write a

report on the islands' economic potential. That report, published in 1976, has since been largely ignored by the Foreign Office.

But Mrs Thatcher appears determined to sidestep the Foreign Office in her own efforts to put the islands on a proper footing, without Argentine cooperation and assistance.

The suggestion has even been made that the Government might be willing to finance the creation of a Falkland Islands government office in London, on the lines of offices now run by the larger dependencies, such as Hong Kong and Bermuda.

The inner Cabinet division is but one element in a complex political power struggle. Mrs Thatcher has the natural support of a large number of Conservative MPs who refuse to countenance negotiation with the junta. It is stated by some of these MPs that Mrs Thatcher would not have survived if the Argentines had accepted the earlier, generous terms which had been delivered by the Foreign Office; terms which have now been withdrawn for good.

But support for Mrs Thatcher in her stand against Mr Pym and the Foreign Office extends beyond such figures as Mr Enoch Powell, to take in a number of silent MPs on the Labour benches.

On the other side of the divide, Mr Pym and Mr William Whitelaw, the Home Secretary, can count on the support of Mr Michael Foot, the Labour leader, Dr David Owen, the parliamentary leader of the Social Democrats, and Mr Edward Heath, as well as a strong cross-party mix of MPs who want to see the eventual reestablishment of friendly relations with Buenos Aires.

Mr Roy Hattersley, the shadow spokesman on home affairs, said in a television interview yesterday that the Prime Minister was being both "short-sighted and foolish" in withdrawing all offers of negotiation.

He said on the *Weekend World* programme: "The idea that they (the Falklands) can retain and return to their previous status, in a permanent state of siege, in what has been called semi-war with Argentina, for a decade or more, is clearly absurd".