

PREM 19/1436

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Confidential

Report by General Sir Hugh Beach
on the handling and control of Military
Information
Censorship Study Group.

DEFENCE

November 1983

Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date
8.12.83							
18.1.85							
28.3.85							
1/4/85							
18/4/85							
<p>PREM 19/1436</p>							

CONFIDENTIAL



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2HB
Telephone 01-~~3307822~~ 218 6169

MO22/5

18th April 1985

Dear Tim

Nicky
Done NR 19/4.
p3r cables current

This is to confirm that we intend to publish the Government's response to the Beach Report on the Control of Military Information as a Command Paper at 1530 next Wednesday, the 24th. I attach a proof copy of the text, which has of course been approved by OD. Publication will be linked to an arranged written PQ. I should be grateful to know by Monday next that you are content with these arrangements.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Private Secretaries of the members of OD, to Chris Roberts (Chief Whip's Office) and to Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

Yours
D J Woodhead

(D J WOODHEAD)

Timothy Flesher Esq
10 Downing Street

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Ministry of Defence

The Protection of Military Information

Government Response to the Report of the
Study Group on Censorship

*Presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for Defence
by Command of Her Majesty
April 1985*

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**THE PROTECTION OF MILITARY INFORMATION
GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE REPORT OF
THE STUDY GROUP ON CENSORSHIP**

**PRESENTED TO PARLIAMENT BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR DEFENCE
BY COMMAND OF HER MAJESTY
APRIL 1985**

1. This paper sets out the Government's response to the report of the Study Group on Censorship (Cmnd. 9112), which was presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for Defence in December 1983. The Study Group was appointed by the Secretary of State in February 1983, with the following terms of reference. "To consider, not least in the light of experience during the Falkland Islands operations, whether any new measures including the introduction of a system of censorship, are necessary in order to protect military information immediately prior to or during conduct of operations." The following paragraphs deal with the main themes of the Study Group's conclusions and recommendations—which are summarised in Chapter 7 of their report. The table at Annex indicates the Government's response to each of the 40 detailed recommendations.

2. The Government wishes to express its gratitude to General Sir Hugh Beach, to the distinguished members of the Study Group and to the secretaries for their thorough and lucid examination of this complex, indeed emotive, subject. As the Study Group's report says (paragraph 28) "Censorship has a bad name in Western societies. By derivation and by centuries of use, the term itself has come to connote the suppression of opinion or the restriction of the free communication of fact". The Study Group has given the Government an excellent basis on which to judge the benefits and penalties of censorship, the practical considerations and the acceptable limits to which censorship can be taken in a free society, as the House of Commons Defence Committee suggested. The desirability of a concerted approach within the NATO Alliance has also been borne very much in mind.

General Principles

3. The Government accepts that few (if indeed any) journalists would willingly publish information which would place lives and the interests of their country at stake in a time of crisis. Plainly, however, journalists cannot always identify precisely the information which would be of use to an enemy. The Government therefore has a duty to provide authoritative advice in the expectation that most journalists would welcome it. There is a difficult balance to be struck between Government's ultimate right and responsibility to act in the interests of national security and the desirability of maintaining the best possible flow of accurate information to the public. In free societies of course the media offers not just fact but informed analysis and criticism.

4. The Government agrees that compulsion of the media would be neither practicable nor desirable and that voluntary co-operation should be the guiding principle. The Government must create the greatest possible degree of trust

between itself and the media; and intensive (and where necessary confidential) briefings have a part to play in this. The Government's aim in peacetime will be to develop, through consultation with the media, the widest possible consensus as to what constitutes legitimate protection of the interests of national security in time of conflict.

Broadcasting

5. The Government recognises that the media must be able to convey an accurate impression of the nature of conflict. There is also, however, a danger, particularly with television, of intrusion on the private distress of British and Allied Servicemen and their families. The Study Group's recommendations on casualty reporting will therefore be drawn to the attention of the media organisations so that they may consider reviewing their codes of practice.

Home Censorship

6. The Government recognises the importance of the control of military information in a major conventional war and that timely arrangements to that end would require contingency planning in peacetime. The Government agrees that extensive guidance to editors would be essential. The Government does not however, believe that a system of home censorship similar to that which operated in the Second World War is practicable today. The totally different volume and nature of international communication and the much larger number of media outlets mean that for practical purposes the country can no longer be enclosed in an "information net". As the Study Group points out, any censorship of the media, to be acceptable, would have to be "enlightened, fair and efficient". But to make it so by this means would require a complex organisation of several hundred high-calibre, well trained staff ready in peacetime to operate at a few days notice. Moreover, unless all our NATO Allies were prepared to adopt similar policies, the efforts of a British censorship could be largely frustrated by factors outside its control.

7. The Government therefore considers that the control of information in general war should rest on an improved advisory service for journalists as is recommended by the Study Group for the control of information in limited conflicts. The Government will set up an embryo organisation which will develop written guidance in consultation with the Defence Press and Broadcasting Committee (DPBC). The embryo organisation will also identify and train a body of staff who could be available at short notice to provide immediate continuous advice to journalists if the need arose. The Government will further consult the DPBC about whether it has any role to perform in time of transition to war or in war itself.

8. The Government accepts that circumstances could arise where additional powers need to be taken for the control of information or special arrangements needed for the live reporting of Parliament. But such matters must be for the Government and Parliament of the day.

9. The Government accepts that recognised foreign correspondents in London should receive essentially the same facilities and guidance as British correspondents and that the British media should in principle be free to report that which

has already been reported in foreign media. In practice, there could be a need for guidance or restrictions on republication of foreign reports, depending on the circumstances of the time—for example the extent to which misleading enemy propaganda has been published. It is also accepted that there may be a case for regulating international telephone and telex calls to and from this country and that authorised users might include the media. These matters will be pursued. The Government agrees that the question of controls over private mail and freight and travellers leaving the country could only be considered in the light of conditions prevailing at the time. Adequate procedures already exist to prohibit the use of radio transmitters as and when determined by the Secretary of State.

Field Censorship

10. The Government accepts that control over military information in the field—in both general war and limited conflicts—should be based on an “accreditation bargain” and “stop lists”. This is very much in line with current plans. Work is already in hand to determine the best possible arrangements, which clearly need to cater both for controlling access to sensitive areas and information; and giving adequate facilities to accredited journalists. Plans were recently tested in exercise LIONHEART. Media organisations will be invited to participate in further work.

Co-ordination with NATO

11. The Government accepts that arguments for censorship, particularly of information specific to and available only in the United Kingdom, are not completely dependent on all other NATO Allies adopting a similar policy. Nevertheless, the views of our Allies will affect what can practicably be achieved in this country. It is therefore highly desirable that the arrangements eventually adopted by the British Government are concerted with NATO allies to the maximum possible extent. To that end, the Government proposes to draw the Study Group's report and this response to it to the attention of the Alliance. The Government will seek to keep the Alliance informed on and involved with its developing policy on relations with the media, both in the field and at home, in major conflicts.

Additional points

12. The Government accepts that “double vetting” is undesirable. The arrangements for protecting military information will be an area of continuous development and review but officials will be asked to make a formal review of progress in the light, amongst other things, of changes in technology, beginning in 1989. A good deal of consideration has already been given to handling as well as protection of information. Nevertheless, the Government recognises that room for improvement exists and work will continue, especially on the question of the accreditation bargain, with the aim of achieving the widest possible consensus amongst the media on the contents of stop-lists and of providing the public relations departments in Whitehall and in the Services with adequate (and where necessary enhanced) complements for war.

STUDY GROUP RECOMMENDATION

General Principles

- 9
- i. Although most journalists would exercise self-censorship when lives and the interests of their own country were at stake, they cannot always identify precisely the information which would be of use to an enemy. Some form of official censorship in time of conflict is therefore desirable. Provided this were enlightened, fair and efficient, most journalists would accept it (paras 134 and 135).
 - ii. Censorship should be limited to preventing the untimely disclosure of information which would prejudice our own or Allied operations and assist the enemy (paras 137 and 141).
 - iii. It is important for public morale that as much news as possible reach the people. There may be good reasons for a Government to seek to delay news of a defeat. But information should always be released as soon as it is safe to do so (paras 143 and 144).
 - iv. Deliberate dissemination of false information through the media is to be eschewed; and deception should form no part of any censorship system. But sophisticated measures to deceive the enemy have a proper role to play in wartime (para 155).
 - v. Well-informed speculation in the media may occasionally give the enemy useful leads. Retired officers and others in receipt of official information should therefore be required to check with MOD before accepting invitations from the media in times of conflict (paras 156 and 157).
 - vi. A system of intensive (and where necessary confidential) briefings both of editors and of correspondents will help to build a relationship of trust and encourage journalists to protect militarily damaging information. The authorities should explain the reasons for their censorship decisions (paras 159 and 160).
 - vii. Military information needs to be protected at the very beginning of a conflict. Contingency planning is therefore necessary (para 161).

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

- i. Accepted so far as field censorship is concerned.
- ii. Accepted.
- iii. Accepted.
- iv. Accepted.
- v. Accepted: this will be pursued by the Ministry of Defence.
- vi. Accepted: such briefings will form part of contingency plans.
- vii. Accepted.

STUDY GROUP RECOMMENDATION

Broadcasting

viii. The media in general and television in particular, should refrain from showing close-up pictures of untreated casualties in serious distress, and should delay showing pictures, or giving names, of any other identifiable casualties for a reasonable period of time. Small revisions to British broadcasters' codes on violence would meet concerns on this front (paras 148 and 149).

ix. A code of practice on violence which reflects concerns about casualty reporting in times of conflict should also be applied by cable operators (para 150).

x. Broadcasting organisations should consider coordinating codes of wartime reporting with their West European counterparts (para 151).

Transition to War

xi. In a period of mounting East-West tension, some restriction of the circulation of military information might be necessary both to prevent war and, if it broke out, to ensure military effectiveness. A good response would probably be obtained from a voluntary arrangement with the media. But if the Government believed more were needed it would be for them to judge whether legislation would be politically acceptable (paras 167 to 174).

xii. Units on the ground should accredit as many as possible of the war correspondents present (para 176).

xiii. Service censorship should begin in a period of mounting East-West tension. Censorship should also apply to civilians in military headquarters and other vital areas (para 177).

Major Conventional War

xiv. A censorship system in the United Kingdom would be valuable in a major conventional war, irrespective of what might be the practice on the Continent (para 138).

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

viii, ix, x. Accepted in principle: the Government will draw to the attention of media organisations.

See page 2.

See page 2.

xi. Accepted: additional powers would be a matter for the Government and Parliament of the day.

xii. Accepted: but in practice decisions would rest with the Defence Public Relations Staff rather than units on the ground.

xiii. Accepted in principle: further work will be required on practical arrangements.

xiv. Accepted but without commonality of practice the value of any United Kingdom measure is very much reduced.

STUDY GROUP RECOMMENDATION

Major Conventional War (contd.)

xv. Such a system should be under-pinned by Defence Regulations broadly similar to those issued in the last war (paras 180 and 181, and 193 to 195).

xvi. Submission to the Press Censorship should be voluntary (para 183).

xvii. Guidance should be issued to British editors; and should be discussed in advance with the media. This could be done through the D Notice Committee. The latter should provide the main forum for consultation between Government and media but should not handle specific complaints, which should be left to the Censorship (paras 184 to 187).

xviii. Censors should be of high calibre, and have a good knowledge of the media and of their subject. A nucleus of 30 should be trained for future contingencies. A Chief Press Censor should be appointed, with direct access to Ministers. He and his staff should be distinct from the MOD Chief of Public Relations and his organisation (paras 188 and 189).

xix. A scrutiny section should be set up to scan both the British and the foreign media for breaches of the regulations (para 190).

xx. Broadcasters should consider revising their codes of practice for wartime reporting to cover live 'phone in programmes (paras 107 and 191).

xxi. Special arrangements may be needed for the live radio reporting of Parliament (para 192).

xxii. Foreign correspondents working in this country should register with the Government, be issued with guidance and encouraged to submit material for vetting; only authorised video pictures should be transmitted. Their international telephone and telex calls should be monitored selectively (paras 196 and 197).

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

xv. This must be a matter for the Government and Parliament of the day.

xvi. Accepted.

xvii. Accepted. The Defence Press and Broadcasting Committee will be consulted further about whether it has any role to perform in transition to war or in war itself.

xviii. The Government does not believe that an effective dormant censorship organisation is a practical proposition. Instead, it proposes to rely on an advisory service to journalists as the Study Group recommended (xxxii) for limited conflicts. An embryo organisation will be set up to make plans accordingly and identify suitable staff.

xix. Accepted, in the context of the Government's proposals.

xx. Accepted in principle: to be drawn to the attention of media organisations.

xxi. This must be a matter for the Government and Parliament of the day.

xxii. Accepted in principle: further work is required on practicalities.

STUDY GROUP RECOMMENDATION

Major Conventional War (contd.)

xxiii. Once information is published outside this country, its publication by the British media must be allowed (para 199).

xxiv. A system should be provided under which international telephone and telex calls to and from this country could be regulated in a major war. Authorised users should include the media (paras 202 to 204).

xxv. Censorship of private mail, freight and travellers leaving the country should be considered in the light of conditions prevailing at the time. "Cables" could be censored by stationing censors in the cable offices (paras 205 and 206).

xxvi. Most licences for long-distance radio transmitters should be revoked. The policing of such a measure should be given further thought by the experts (para 207).

xxvii. In a major war in Europe, the forces of Allied nations would be brought under the command of the Major NATO Commanders; a firm direction to them on military information policy from the North Atlantic Council is therefore important (paras 140 and 176).

xxviii. An accreditation "bargain" should be struck with war correspondents. Further study should be given to the type of facilities which could be offered and to the number and types of correspondents who should be offered them (paras 208 and 209).

xxix. Because of the difficulties of stopping all transmissions of information by non-authorised persons, the military would need to exercise rigid control of access to sensitive areas and information (paras 210 to 212).

xxx. Escort officers should be distinct from censors. Both should be carefully selected and trained. This also applies to a limited conflict (paras 213 and 224).

xxxi. The type of information to be protected needs to be discussed in NATO. Some field censorship of casualty reporting would be necessary (para 214).

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

xxiii. Accepted in principle: the extent to which guidance or restrictions could be necessary in practice must be for the Government and Parliament of the day.

xxiv. This will be pursued.

xxv. Accepted.

xxvi. The desirability of restrictions on the use of long range radio transmitters is recognised. Adequate powers already exist to impose such restrictions.

xxvii. This is a matter for the Alliance as a whole. The Government will consult our Allies.

xxviii. Accepted.

xxix. Accepted.

xxx. Accepted.

xxxi. Accepted (see xxvii above).

STUDY GROUP RECOMMENDATION

Limited Conflicts

xxxii. There should be no formal censorship system at home in limited conflicts. But there would be merit in providing an improved advisory service for journalists, based on the D Notice system. Thought should be given now to the type of information that would need to be protected (para 216 to 218).

xxxiii. The foreign media should not be obliged to participate in the system but should be encouraged to do so. MOD should improve its relations with them (para 220).

xxxiv. In the field, an accreditation "bargain" with war correspondents should again apply. But it would only work as long as control of access in and around the conflict area were possible. This should be studied by MOD (paras 221 and 222).

xxxv. The Government should consider the impact of their decision on international opinion when deciding whether to accredit foreign war correspondents (para 223).

xxxvi. "Stop lists" should form part of MOD contingency plans (para 225).

xxxvii. Service correspondence should normally be censored (para 226).

Additional Points

xxxviii. There should not normally be a second level of vetting in London. A small unit of "field" censors might, however, be necessary in this country to handle correspondents accompanying the Armed Forces on sorties but returning to the United Kingdom to prepare their material (paras 227 and 228).

xxxix. In view of developments in technology, we recommend reappraisal before the end of the decade (para 229).

xxxx. The "handling" and "protection" of information are two sides of the same coin. British Governments should pay more attention to the former as well as to the latter (paras 159 and 232).

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

xxxii. Accepted. The Defence Press and Broadcasting Committee will be consulted further about its role in such a situation.

xxxiii. Accepted.

xxxiv. Accepted.

xxxv. Accepted.

xxxvi. Accepted.

xxxvii. Accepted in principle: further work is required on the practicalities.

xxxviii. Accepted.

xxxix. Accepted: officials will review progress in 1989.

xxxx. Accepted.

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SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DEFENCE

Beach Report

1. I have now seen your minute of 27 March to the Prime Minister. I agree with your recommendation, which accords with our discussion in OD on 21 January.

2. I am copying this minute to OD colleagues, the Home Secretary and Sir Robert Armstrong.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'G. Howe'.

GEOFFREY HOWE

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

1 April 1985

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Beach

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

28 March 1985

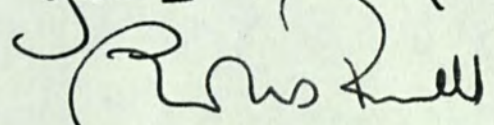
Dear Richard,

Beach Report on the Control of
Military Information

The Prime Minister has considered the Defence Secretary's minute of 27 March about the Beach Report.

Subject to the views of colleagues the Prime Minister is content with the proposals in paragraph 3 of that minute.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Private Secretaries to members of OD, to the Private Secretary to the Home Secretary and to Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

Yours sincerely,

(Charles Powell)

Richard Mottram, Esq.,
Ministry of Defence.

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RM



Prime Minister
Agree revised
wording.

Yes Mr

MO 22/5

PRIME MINISTER

BEACH REPORT ON THE CONTROL OF MILITARY INFORMATION

When we discussed the Beach Report at OD on 21st January, we were concerned about the possible abuse of the automatic freedom which the study group proposed that the British media should have to publish anything already published in the foreign media. I was invited to circulate a revised version of paragraph 9 and the response to Recommendation XXIII in the draft Command Paper.

2. I share the concern over the dangers of abuse. Given, however, that to reject the Recommendation would provide the only point on which the Government could be said to be taking a harder line than General Beach and his Committee, I am also concerned to ensure that we do nothing to fuel the present public debate over the Official Secrets Act and access to information generally. The Government really cannot say what detailed restrictions would apply in crisis and war: so much depends on the circumstances.

3. I therefore propose that we accept the Recommendation in principle but make clear that restrictions might be required in practice. The possible need to counter enemy propaganda (which while rather different from national security, was in our minds at OD), could provide a suitable ground for restrictions. The relevant part of paragraph 9 would read as follows:

"The Government accepts that recognised foreign correspondents in London should receive essentially the same facilities and



guidance as British correspondents and that the British media should in principle be free to report that which has already been reported in foreign media. In practice, there could be a need for guidance or restrictions on republication of foreign reports, depending on the circumstances of the time - for example the extent to which misleading enemy propaganda had been published."

The response to Recommendation XXIII would then read as follows:

"Accepted in principle: the extent to which guidance or restrictions could be necessary in practice must be for the Government and Parliament of the day."

4. I propose to publish the Government response in the first half of April. I should be grateful, therefore, for confirmation that you and our colleagues are content by 29th March.

5. I am sending copies of this minute to other colleagues on OD, the Home Secretary and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Ministry of Defence
27th March 1985

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DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY
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JU849

Secretary of State for Trade and Industry

18 January 1985

CM 21/i

Charles Powell Esq
Private Secretary to the
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London SW1

Dear Charles,

BEACH REPORT ON THE PROTECTION OF MILITARY INFORMATION

I am afraid that other commitments mean that my Secretary of State will not be able to attend the meeting on Monday 21 January, when this paper is to be discussed. There is really little that he would wish to contribute in discussion of the paper, with which he is broadly content. If you agree, he would not therefore propose to be represented at the meeting.

Copies of this letter go to the private secretaries of members of OD and to John Wiggins in the Cabinet Office.

Yours ever

Colin

M C McCARTHY
Private Secretary

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Prime Minister
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PRIME MINISTER

c Sir Robert Armstrong

Beach Report on the Protection of Military Information
(OD(84)19) attached.

BACKGROUND

The note by officials circulated under OD(84)19 reports on the implications of implementing the recommendations of the Study Group on the control of military information which was set up under the chairmanship of General Sir Hugh Beach in the wake of the Falklands campaign. It is now twelve months since the Beach Report was presented to Parliament as Cmnd. 9112. Proposals on the Government response to the Beach recommendations were made last May by the Ministry of Defence after consideration by the Chiefs of Staff, and inter-departmental agreement was reached among officials in July on the proposals to be made to Ministers. The Ministry of Defence considered at that stage that the Defence Press and Broadcasting Committee (DPBC), which is composed of both Government and Press/Broadcasting representatives, should be consulted before the matter was brought to OD. The Defence Secretary agreed in December that, subject to the inclusion of certain amendments proposed by the DPBC, the note by officials, now circulated under OD(84)19, could go forward for consideration by OD.

2. The main Beach recommendations, summarised in paragraph 7 of the note by officials, fall under the two headings of censorship to be applied in limited conflicts and censorship in general war. The note proposes acceptance of the former, but does not believe that the implementation of the Beach recommendations, as they apply to general war, would be a practicable proposition because of the resources required and



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because we could not persuade NATO Allies to pursue the same course. A draft White Paper setting out a public response by the Government on these lines is proposed at Annex A to the note.

3. The Minister of State, HM Treasury (Mr Hayhoe) will represent the Chancellor of the Exchequer at the meeting. The Home Secretary and the Chief of the Defence Staff have been invited to attend. The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry will not be represented at the meeting.

HANDLING

4. You should invite the Secretary of State for Defence to open the discussion. The Home Secretary should be asked to give his views on whether the proposed home censorship measures are both acceptable and capable of being put into action. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary should be invited to advise on the likely reaction of our NATO partners and the Minister of State, HM Treasury on resource aspects. You may wish to structure discussion to cover the following principal issues -

(a) The extent of censorship to be applied in limited conflicts

As the note by officials indicates, the proposed censorship of Servicemen's correspondence has not been applied since Suez. Furthermore, such censorship and the accreditation system proposed for journalists could have considerable resource implications. The Defence Secretary should advise on the need for the censorship of Servicemen's correspondence in limited war and on his Department's ability to absorb the cost of what is proposed.

(b) The extent of censorship to be applied in general war

With field censorship remaining broadly as proposed for limited war, the most important recommendation under this heading is that concerning home censorship. Beach proposes



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that a system on the lines of that used in the last war should be planned in peace time and implemented in any future general war but the note by officials argues that this is not a practicable proposition. Are the changes in the nature of society generally and of the media in particular since the Second World War so great as to make it no longer possible to enclose the country in the sort of "information net" which was maintained in the 1940s? You should invite the views of the Home Secretary and the Defence Secretary. Is the alternative home censorship scheme favoured in the note by officials (a system of strengthened advice to the home media in consultation with the DPBC) a credible solution? Is the DPBC likely to agree to play the role required of it in sponsoring guidance to the media? Will it be possible to provide the required 50-100 well-trained high-calibre staff, available at seven days' notice, to give the continuous service of guidance and interpretation to those journalists who seek it? The Defence Secretary should advise, with the Minister of State, HM Treasury being invited to comment on resource considerations.

(c) Likely NATO reactions to what is proposed

Beach recognised that the attitude of our NATO partners would substantially affect the efficiency of United Kingdom censorship in general war. Are our NATO Allies likely to be willing to adopt similar plans to those proposed? The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary should be invited to advise.

(d) Proposed publication of a Command Paper

The draft White Paper in its present form commits the Government to acceptance of a number of censorship proposals which could have significant resource implications. Is it sensible to accept this degree of commitment without a clearer picture of the costs? Should the Beach recommen-



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dations (xvii and xxxii) which relate to the future role of the DPBC be formally accepted as proposed, before the consultation with that Committee is complete? The Defence Secretary should advise on these issues and on the timing of publication. Given the elapse of time since the Beach Report was published as a Command Paper in December 1983, there is obvious merit in publishing the proposed response as quickly as the need to inform NATO authorities permits.

CONCLUSION

5. You could guide the Committee, subject to discussion, to agree the recommendations of the note by officials and to agree a timetable for informing NATO authorities and for the publication of the proposed Command Paper.

Bryan Cartledge

B G Cartledge

17 January 1985

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

8 December, 1983.

Thank you for your letter of 28 November with which you enclosed the Report of the Committee under the Chairmanship of General Sir Hugh Beach, on the auditing and control of military information. This is just to confirm that the Prime Minister is content that the Report should be published on Wednesday, 14 December.

I am sending copies of this letter to Murdo Maclean (Chief Whip's Office) and Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

Timothy Flesher

B.P. Neale, Esq.,
Ministry of Defence.

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MR FLESHER

Press Minister:

You need do no
more than glance at Bernard's
note and be conclusive. The
only issue is whether the report should
now be published. Agree? *7/12*

Yes Mr.

You asked for my advice on the report on Protection of Military Information (or censorship, as it will be called) to which I gave evidence. See Annex I (written) and Annex II (the summary of my oral evidence).

General Beach's Committee, on which the media were strongly represented, has produced a very workmanlike report which is in many respects in line with my thinking, and reflects it at a substantial number of points.

It comes out in favour of some form of official censorship (paras 134-135).

It recommends a discretionary system of press censorship in the event of a major conventional war (para 138) - ie. one to which submission is voluntary but which carries penalties if material used contravenes regulations. (The Committee perhaps naturally places more reliance on voluntary response but it is only fair to say I moved towards their position under cross-examination).

It places the emphasis on field vetting rather than on central vetting. (I remain doubtful about this).

It very helpfully deals with such problems of close-up pictures of casualties; the problems of public morale, disinformation, briefing and taking the media more into the Government's confidence; and the difficulties of even discussing censorship in some continental countries.

The report emphasises the limited value of the Falklands experience but takes every opportunity to forward the discussion of problems which that conflict threw up.

The Government is not committed to accept all or any of the recommendations. But I am sure that the report should be published, as recommended on December 14, to further public discussion.

Action is being taken in Whitehall to consider the report's recommendations and I have been invited to take part.

B. INGHAM
7 December 1983

COMMITTEE ON CENSORSHIP

NOTE FROM THE CHIEF PRESS SECRETARY,
NO 10 DOWNING STREET

1. This note sets out some thoughts, based partly on the Falklands experience, on censorship before and during military operations.

Qualifications

2. The writer was a journalist for 18 years first on a local weekly; then in a district office for regional morning and evening newspapers (The Yorkshire Post and Yorkshire Evening Post); then as Northern Industrial Correspondent for the Yorkshire Post; and finally spent 5 years on The Guardian, the last two of which were as a Labour correspondent in London. Since then I have been successively Head of Information at the National Board for Prices and Incomes and in the Departments of Employment and Energy. I have no experience as a journalist of covering military operations.

3. As Chief Press Secretary at No 10 my responsibilities in relation to the Falklands operation were set out in written evidence to the House of Commons Defence Committee (see Annex I). In that capacity I had no direct experience of censorship - since no formal system of censorship operated during the Falklands campaign - but I was confronted daily during the military phase of the operation with the consequences of attempts to exercise some control over reportage from the theatre.

Background

4. The comments set out below are framed against a certain background:

- (i) my views on censorship as expressed in oral evidence to the Commons Defence Committee (Pg. 395, Minutes of Evidence); in that evidence I felt that the media might have been

happier with "cast iron censorship"; and I expressed the view that I did not think I could trust the press without censorship in a military operation because of the competitive pressures - "and I do not think they (the media) would want to be asked to bear that trust";

- (ii) the Defence Committee's view that there is probably only limited scope for D. Notices in war time conditions;
- (iii) the Defence Committee's belief that censorship can be justified;
- (iv) my conviction that the Falklands operation is of limited, though nonetheless valuable, use in examining censorship to protect military information. This is because the circumstances were probably unique in the extent to which first the Argentines and then the UK had control over access to the theatre of operations, and in the lack of immediate television from the front;
- (v) my regret, notwithstanding the limited value of the Falklands experience, that the responsibilities and role of the media in a democratic society at war have been given so little attention in the wake of the 1982 campaign.

Approach

5. My approach to censorship starts from the definition of Government objectives. In any conflict the clear and unequivocal policy of any democratic Government must be to secure its military objectives with the minimum loss of life while at the same time retaining the maximum public support for the operation.

6. The prime aim must be to win and safeguard life but holding and carrying public opinion runs it a close second. The two are not necessarily at all times mutually consistent.

7. However, it is important not to have one's thinking circumscribed by the Falklands experience. For a substantial period the Falklands Task Force was the unused strong right arm of diplomacy. A number of the most senior political correspondents either did not believe or were very sceptical that the UK would ultimately use force. I was forced once to remonstrate with a most senior broadcaster, who was seeking Government help in attempting to strike a deal with the Argentines over television facilities, that the UK Government was not in the business of journalism but of winning. War was never formally declared.

8. Once again the Falklands experience is shown to be atypical. We need to put ourselves in different circumstances, ranging from immediate invasion of NATO territory (or that of an ally) to a build up of tension leading to the likelihood of hostilities - both in areas which are easily accessible to the media - ie. press, radio and television.

9. But, whatever the circumstances, the questions which arise are:

- (i) can censorship be justified?
- (ii) if so how is that censorship to be defined?
- (iii) how and when is it to be introduced - should there be consultation or decree?
- (iv) how is it to be operated in the case of:
 - (a) press;
 - (b) radio;
 - (c) television; and
 - (d) film?
- (v) will the chosen method of operation be effective (and therefore fair)?

10. I discuss each point in turn below, recognising that there are probably no finite answers and that timing, extent, method and presentation will vary with circumstances.

Discussion

11. Can censorship be justified? In my view, there is no doubt that it can be justified and that censorship would probably soon come to be demanded by the public in circumstances where military operations were being conducted. It should be noted that the general public are probably far more disposed to censorship than the media. Censorship is in any case practised in peacetime by, for example, a refusal to discuss the activities of the SAS, SBS, etc.

12. The need for and extent of censorship should turn primarily on military requirements and the safeguarding of life. Its justification will be more readily accepted if these are seen to be the motivating forces for its introduction. Of course, military objectives will be likely to be more easily achieved with the minimum of loss of life if public opinion is solid at home. It is difficult wholly to divorce military requirements and public relations. And censorship will be widely recognised as necessary - indeed not merely desirable but essential - the clearer the threat to the country or its interests is perceived. But censorship introduced - or believed to have been introduced - primarily for public relations reasons will be less acceptable.

13. This last point however raises a particularly acute problem in relation to television and film. It was a problem left entirely unresolved by the Falklands campaign because of the inability to satellite out immediate film. Pictures of operations which might pass the censor in purely military terms may nonetheless have serious implications for public support in the UK - the so-called Vietnam consequence. What for some may be questions of taste will for others be a matter, to say the least, of military moment. This issue needs to be faced in any consideration of censorship.

14. I for one do not believe that television - any more than the press and radio - can be left to be the sole arbiters of taste or impact on the public in circumstances of war. A democratically elected Government is entitled to identify the public interest and prosecute

it. I write as one who believes that pictures from the Falklands of soldiers on the battlefield with limbs freshly blown off were unhelpful, offensive, unnecessary and to be deplored. That view will conceivably not be shared by all members of the Committee on Censorship. I am however no more impressed with the argument that pictures of war, among other things, can safely be left to television men than I am with the idea that power can safely be left to Governments. Pictures, like power, corrupt the practitioner.

15. In short, I believe that censorship is essential in military conflict; and that it should be exercised openly and unapologetically, and according to as clearly defined principles as possible.

16. What is more, it is my conviction that the media, while conceivably grumbling or even actively opposing censorship, would actually prefer it to a hit or miss system of interfering with coverage. It is my contention that what the media found objectionable in the Falklands situation was the lack of uniformity of control - used as a term indicating mild censorship - and apparent inconsistencies in vetting, rather than censorship per se.

17. It would in fact be odd if the media objected to censorship when their universal protest throughout the Falklands campaign was that they would, of course, do nothing to damage the national interest - without, of course, being able to demonstrate conclusively their reasonable ability to identify that interest.

18. To summarise: in circumstances of military conflict the Government has a duty to identify the national interest and where that requires censorship to exercise it, recognising the need at the same time to carry public opinion with it. The Government's objectives will best be served the more openly censorship is exercised according to clearly defined principles.

19. Given that censorship can be justified, how is that censorship to be defined? In the light of the Falklands experience, and recognising that confusion is an inevitable concomitant of war, I

regard definition as a key to acceptability. The media, like all humanity, like to know where they stand. Like all free born individuals, they object to being messed around. Like all of us, they respond better to a sense of fairness than to a feeling that they are being treated unfairly. Thus I believe the Government's duty in circumstances of armed conflict is not merely to act on censorship, but to act decisively.

20. It follows that clear guidelines need to be established at the outset as to what is and what is not permissible and these need to be communicated both to media and all concerned with communications in Government - eg. Ministers and officials not actually involved in censorship. Given that it is not possible to cater for all circumstances and that judgement will always need to be exercised, the objective should be to set out the principles as clearly as possible. These principles should err on the side of restriction rather than flexibility, if the overall objective is to be served. And they should cover film and sound as well as words. But they should be framed on a practical and commonsense basis rather than a theoretical one, and take due account of the need to carry public opinion (which to repeat may be easier to carry than that of the media).

21. How and when is censorship to be introduced? This is inevitably a political decision based upon military advice. It will be necessary for the Government to be able to demonstrate convincingly that censorship is in the national interest. This will conceivably occur well before the outbreak of any actual hostilities.

22. I do not believe it should be introduced after consultation. It follows from my view that the Government needs to act on censorship decisively (para 19 above) that the Government should do just that. But it should show itself ready to keep the principles, method and operation under review and to receive and take account of representations

23. How is censorship to be operated? This will depend in part on the degree of censorship which will presumably depend in turn on the nature and degree of hostilities. But it is in this area above all that we

need to divorce ourselves from the Falklands experience. Instead, we need to recognise the possibility of conventional war in an area from which it is difficult to exclude journalists who, whatever their nationality, will feed a news-hungry media with news and pictures as red hot as they can get or make them.

24. That reality inevitably will condition the method of censorship. In my view, it is unrealistic to expect effective censorship to be performed at the front. And censorship is only of value - and indeed acceptable - if it is effective. In my view there are three basic requirements:

- dissemination of ground rules/guidelines/principles at the front;
- requirement on all media in the UK to submit their coverage to a censor before use; this will require consideration of the regional and local dimension, given the spread of local radio; do the powers exist?;
- concentration of censorship in London, or the centre of Government.

25. It follows from this that if censorship is to be effective correspondents should be accredited and that the censor should disqualify copy/sound/tape/film from unaccredited correspondents.

Conclusion

26. Censorship is essential - and acceptable- in connection with military operations. Censorship only serves its purpose if it is effective. It is in the public interest, not to mention that of the Armed Services, that if it is introduced it is operated effectively. That also goes for the media who can have no use for an ineffective system which does not mete out uniform treatment. But any system of censorship should be openly introduced and operated according to publicly defined guidelines. Government can confidently introduce censorship in connection with military operations on this basis safe in

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the knowledge that, assuming victory is achieved, it will be made to answer for its stewardship in Parliament. And that is where it should answer; not in the press, on radio or on the television screen.

CHIEF PRESS SECRETARY

No 10 DOWNING STREET.

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MINUTES OF EVIDENCE TAKEN BEFORE
THE DEFENCE COMMITTEE

385

TUESDAY 9 NOVEMBER 1982
[AFTERNOON SITTING]

Members present:

Sir Timothy Kitson, in the Chair

Mr Bernard Conlan
Dr John Gilbert
Mr Michael Marshall

Mr Michael Mates
Mr Chris Patten
Sir Patrick Wall

MEMORANDUM SUBMITTED BY THE CHIEF PRESS SECRETARY,
No. 10 DOWNING STREET [DF 49, 1981-82]

The Government's objective during the crisis can be simply stated: to recover the Falkland Islands and the Dependencies by negotiation, if possible, but if necessary by force of arms, making every effort to minimise the loss of life.

This overall objective, and the recognition from the outset that the use of force might become necessary, set the broad policy framework within which information staff conducted their operations on behalf of Ministers.

Information officers, as servants of policy, sought to help secure the Government's objectives while at the same time preserving their integrity and longer-term effectiveness.

The task of informing the media and, through them the public, of developments in policy, measures and operations rests primarily with the responsible Department. Only that Department is equipped by background, expertise, flow of information and resources properly and fully to inform the media and public, taking account of all the circumstances.

The responsibility cannot be delegated to or assumed by another Department or by the Prime Minister's Press Office. But No. 10 Press Office can and does assist individual Departments to get over their message. It did so during the Falklands crisis on the basis of information supplied by the lead Department which also provided guidance on its presentation. In this case the two main sources of information and guidance were the FCO and MoD.

One of the tasks of the Chief Press Secretary to the Prime Minister is to co-ordinate at official level the presentation of Government policy and measures. In doing so he seeks to ensure that Departments are aware of wider considerations and events in making announcements or conducting information exercises.

During the Falklands crisis the main instrument of co-ordination was a daily meeting lasting some 30 minutes generally attended by representatives of the FCO, MoD, COI, Cabinet Office and the office of the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Paymaster General under the chairmanship of the Chief Press Secretary or his deputy. The purpose of the meetings was to take stock of developments and their implications for the public; to bring the Departments and Offices up-to-date with events; to anticipate, in so far as this was possible, events over the next 24 hours; and to agree on or make recommendations about the action required.

In addition, No. 10 Press Office maintained hour by hour contact with those of Departments to keep abreast of events and developments and to secure guidance on the information to be disclosed and its presentation. Where possible, a No. 10 Press Office representative attended Departmental press conferences or briefings.

The Chief Press Secretary and his staff brief a large number of journalists, both British and foreign, in the course of the normal day, both individually and in groups. The demand

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for group briefings greatly increased—and was met—during the crisis. The prime sources of information presented in such briefings were the policy Departments—predominantly FCO and MoD. No. 10 Press Office did not take the lead in making announcements about the progress of hostilities or losses and casualties.

After the decision to dispatch the Task Force the Chief Press Secretary came under heavy direct pressure from editors (who believed they would not be represented on board) to make more media places available. He urged MoD Public Relations staff to:

- increase the small number of media places initially set aside; and
- accredit to the Task Force a media team representative of press, radio and television.

The MoD responded by increasing the number of places on offer. But it remained clear that, because of the constraints on the number of media berths available, the heavy demand for places and the marked reluctance of individual newspaper groups (as distinct from BBC/ITN) to contemplate pooling even within their group, MoD was never going to be able to satisfy everyone.

September 1982

9 November

MR BERNARD

1664. Good. Thank you for the evidence you've given by putting to seen in some that the Press Committee lacks credibility. Would you say (Mr Ingham) necessarily in on whether with the media given time, Taylor, provided operate and having read put before whether indeed some of the difficulty because three Services position is that on top having would have the help—and the experience of ordinating fun of overall poli

1665. Could the liaison bet during the Fall (Mr Ingham) about liaison MoD but as bet people. The po out No. 10 trie departments to department is ourselves of the I held meetings between 8 Apr meetings were FCO and other evidence. At ea of the particip tion, and, may we met for made their cont the events of t

Item 3: Evidence by Chief Press Secretary, No. 10 (Mr Ingham)

References: (a) CSG(83)29 - Note by Chief Press Secretary,
No. 10.

(b) HCDC Minutes of Evidence, pp 385-397.

16. Mr Ingham began by explaining that the thesis of his paper was that if there were to be censorship it should be effective.

17. His experience during the Falklands conflict was that, while the media might grumble, they would prefer to know where they stood. We needed to make no apologies; where peoples' lives were at stake, censorship was entirely justified. If the war was won, the Government stood to be judged in a democratic Parliament for the way in which it had discharged its responsibilities.

18. Mr Ingham said that although he would prefer to proceed by consent, he had little trust in a voluntary arrangement. The press of the last war was not the media of today. Apart from the fact that there was now television and widespread local radio, the spirit of the media had changed. Parts of it had been hijacked by pressure groups, and the consequences could be seen day after day. Moreover, we now had a society which resented authority. Suspicions about Government integrity had reached a new intensity: people had seen one too many Watergates, and Government was now typically thought either to be chronically inept or else up to no good. He saw this in his work, when he was frequently treated as an inveterate liar, incapable of telling the truth. He believed that if a major war broke out, Fleet Street and television would become more responsible (the provincials and radio caused relatively fewer problems). But there would still be many grey areas. While, therefore, he would prefer a system along 1940 lines, if that were possible, his experience led him to doubt whether it would work. As to practicalities, if making the system work meant placing a censor in every newsroom, so be it. The staff were available in the Ministry of Defence - although ensuring quality could be problematical.

19. Asked about the extent of any censorship, Mr Ingham said that he would not wish to impose censorship purely for public relations reasons. But it was hard to disentangle PR concerns from concern about life and limb, since Servicemen would clearly perform better the more they felt that the public was behind them. A balance must be struck. In some circumstances, it might well be right to delay bad news until a more favourable opportunity arose. But he would not wish, for example, to stop items critical of the Government, or of the military leadership; nor should censorship be imposed for party political advantage.

20. Asked about the apothegm coined in para 14 of his paper ("pictures, like power, corrupt the practitioner") Mr Ingham explained that there were many television people who were mesmerised by pictures and were incapable of lifting their eyes to the wider problems which they could cause. The lesson of Vietnam was that the Americans had lost. We had been spared the problem during the Falklands conflict, but if instantaneous pictures had been coming in there would have been considerable tension between the Government and the broadcasters, as well as between the broadcasters and the public. It was his regret, as he had said (para 4(v)) in his paper, that the media still refused to face up to the question of what role they should play and what responsibilities they had in a democratic society. While accepting, for example, that it was impossible to report war without referring to its ugly side, he seriously questioned whether it was necessary to show pictures of recognisable soldiers with their limbs freshly blown off.

21. It was suggested that there might be three reasons for ruling such pictures offside:-

a. bad taste;

b.

b. distress to relatives (whether of the individual concerned or generally); or

c. the undermining of morale.

Mr Ingham repeated that he would not impose censorship on grounds of morale: one could not hide the consequences of war, and he had sufficient faith in the British political system to believe that no-one would dare try. He also accepted that the question of good or bad taste was a personal one; but he was doubtful, for reasons mentioned earlier, about leaving it to the broadcasters to decide. It was impossible to avoid distress to the general public; but distress to individuals should be guarded against.

22. Mr Ingham explained that there was one area to which his paper had given insufficient attention: control of the media at the front. It was a good idea, if there were to be war correspondents, to take them aside and explain to them carefully the ground rules. As for our allies, it was to be hoped that they would take a responsible attitude to this question; if they did not take similar action to that which we took there would, of course, be problems: it was therefore vital that NATO get its act together.

23. Asked about delaying information for Parliamentary reasons, Mr Ingham said that he did not believe there needed to be an overridingly tender concern for Parliament in wartime. It was, of course, better "news management" to ensure that a Minister's statement came out first, but the same end could be achieved by an on-the-record statement from himself. The Government could not hamstring itself with Parliamentary hours. Too much emphasis had been put on this at times during the Falklands.

24. On organisation, it was important that the Standing Committee on Information Policy should be chaired by a Cabinet Minister: this element had been lacking during much of the Falklands crisis. The need was for someone of high stature, who could "square the awkward squad". Moreover, if a Minister rather than Ian MacDonald had made the public statements, much of the Parliamentary dimension would have been made easier. Statements could either be made by the Chairman of the SCIP or devolved to the Minister in charge of the relevant department.

25. Finally, on disinformation, Mr Ingham said that this should play no part in public relations. To maintain his credibility he had scrupulously to eschew it.

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1

Telephone 01-830-7022 218 6169

MO 22/5

28th November 1983

Dear Tim,

The Committee, under the chairmanship of General Sir Hugh Beach, the Warden of St George's House, Windsor, which was set up earlier this year to study the handling and control of military information, have now presented their report to the Defence Secretary. Sir John Nott announced the establishment of this "Censorship Study Group" when he gave evidence to the House of Commons Defence Committee on 10th November 1982; and Mr Heseltine gave details of the Study Group's membership and terms of reference in a Commons Written Answer on 16th February this year (Col 199). I attach a copy of the Report as presented by Sir Hugh Beach, together with a short synopsis of the whole report.

My Secretary of State considers that, in view of the high-level nature of the Committee and the likely Parliamentary interest in the subject, the report should be published as a Command Paper; although this does not of course commit the Government to accepting all, or indeed any, of its recommendations. He further considers that there would be merit in publishing before Christmas; and, subject to the Prime Minister's agreement, proposes that publication of the Censorship Study Group report (less Annex 'O', which starts from a basis of classified information) be arranged on Wednesday 14th December.

Discussions are already under way to consider the report's recommendations, and on how consultation across Whitehall might best be managed. In addition, members of the "D" Notice Committee will also need to be consulted in view of the recommendations which directly concern them, and action on this is in hand.

Timothy Flesher Esq

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Finally, you will wish to note that my Secretary of State will be informing the House by Written Answer that he has received the report, and that it is intended to publish it soon.

I would be grateful to know that the Prime Minister is content that the attached report of the Censorship Study Group should be published on Wednesday 14th December.

Copies of this letter and of the report go to Murdo Maclean (Chief Whip's office) and Richard Hatfield (Sir Robert Armstrong's office).

*Yours ever,
B P Neale*

(B P NEALE)

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THE PROTECTION OF MILITARY INFORMATIONREPORT OF THE STUDY GROUP
ON CENSORSHIPSynopsisChapter 2

1. The report first considers what is meant by the term "military information" and concludes that there can be no simple definition. Many items of information will be of use to an enemy in wartime, but these will vary with each conflict and with the stage it has reached. The onus rests on Government to decide what information must be protected. A balance must be struck between the needs of security and the desirability of keeping the public informed.

2. Although the enemy may glean some useful information either by using satellites or from more traditional methods of spying, there is much that can be hidden. If valuable information is consistently disseminated through the media, the enemy's task is considerably simplified.

3. There are many means open to the Government for protecting military information, of which censorship is one. Censorship has a bad name in Western societies. Nonetheless, many journalists whose views were canvassed were in favour of some form of Government censorship in wartime. Objections were based on the arguments that: journalists would censor themselves; official censorship was no longer practicable; Government would extend the limits beyond what was legitimate in military terms; and in a war in Europe it would be pointless for the United Kingdom alone to introduce censorship. In an attempt to establish how substantial these objections are, the report looks first at recent conflicts and then at relevant developments during the last four decades.

Chapter 3

4. The report describes in detail the systems operated both at home and in the field in: the Second World War, Korea, Suez, the Falklands, Vietnam and Israel; and draws certain lessons from each.

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5. In conflicts involving British forces, home censorship applied only in world war; in limited conflicts there was no formal home censorship system. Field censorship of war correspondents was applied in all conflicts involving British forces; censorship of Service correspondence only in world war and at Suez. For the Press, the Second World War system at home was generally one of discretionary censorship: journalists were not obliged to submit material before publication but could be prosecuted if they released information useful to the enemy. In the field, mandatory censorship always applied: correspondents could only transmit material after it had been officially vetted. At home, private correspondence was also censored in the Second World War: selectively for internal mail and telephones; consistently for international communications. Plans for both Press and private censorship in major war continued until the early 1960's, when the NATO doctrine of "massive retaliation" made censorship seem no longer relevant; they were not re-introduced when NATO doctrine changed to one of "flexible response".

6. There was no formal censorship of the media in Vietnam, although a loose form of control did operate, in that correspondents breaching certain ground-rules could be discredited. Relations between the military and the media were not always smooth. Some have attributed this friction, and the American public's consequent disillusionment with the war, to the absence of censorship. But although television pictures showing the horrors of war certainly contributed to the disillusionment, many other factors played a part. The main lesson of Vietnam is that support for a war will only continue as long as the public can understand, and identify with, its purpose and the methods used.

7. In Israel, censorship has been operating continuously since 1948. There is no distinction between home and field censorship because of Israel's small size and consequent proximity to almost every theatre of operations. Although legal provision exists for mandatory censorship, the system is generally based on voluntary submission of material. This applies to both Israeli and foreign journalists. There has generally been a wide measure of acceptance of the Israeli censorship.

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Chapter 4

8. The report now considers certain changes in the Western world since the last war: in society; in the number and type of media outlets; and in technology. It also looks at the NATO dimension.

9. As to social changes, it concludes that there is now greater diversity, more scepticism and a stronger expectation of news, but that most people's attitudes to the national interest have not changed so much that they would knowingly damage the war effort if this country were directly attacked or threatened.

10. In the media, the last four decades have seen the development of television, the introduction of the "alternative" press and ethnic press, and the increasing regionalisation of media outlets, with local radio and the growth of the "free" or "give-away" local press. In addition, cable television will come into operation during 1984; and two years later should see the introduction of direct broadcasting by satellite, which will eventually mean that British viewers could receive transmissions direct from other countries, including Eastern Europe.

11. Developments in technology have affected both the collection and transmission of information. The advent of automation in telephone and telex systems means that complete control on Second World War lines would no longer be feasible. The growth of amateur and private radio, with the possibility of using "burst transmissions", could make it very difficult to control information passed by this means. Communications satellites are a major new development, but are still a complex means of passing information, requiring an up-station, a transponder on a satellite with a "footprint" in the area, a method of operational co-ordination between satellite users, and a ground-station. It is easier to transmit verbal than visual material, even by satellite; but developments in technology are facilitating all forms of transmission of information. The report therefore recommends reappraisal before the end of the decade.

12. As to the NATO dimension, there is no general policy on censorship in the Alliance, and few Allies have any censorship plans for use in war.

Chapter 5

13. The report now attempts to draw some general principles from past practice and the present context. It concludes that even though most journalists would exercise self-censorship when lives and the interests of their own country were at stake, some official censorship in wartime is necessary; and that provided such censorship were enlightened, fair and efficient, most journalists would accept it. The report suggests that, irrespective of what might be the practice on the Continent, a home censorship system in the United Kingdom would be valuable in major war; but overseas, particularly on the Central Front and flanks of NATO, a unified Alliance system for dealing with journalists would be necessary. The limits of any censorship should be narrowly defined: censorship should seek only to prevent the untimely disclosure of information which would prejudice our own or Allied operations and assist the enemy.

14. The report next considers issues which have only an indirect bearing on the protection of military information: public morale; "taste and tone", particularly on television; enemy transmissions; deception of the enemy; speculation in the media; and the need for trust between the authorities and the media.

15. It concludes that for public morale reasons, as much news as possible should reach the people; but that there should be certain limits on casualty reporting, particularly on television, and that a code of wartime reporting should be considered by West European broadcasters. On the question of deceiving the enemy, the report concludes that the deliberate dissemination of false information through the media is to be eschewed, but that sophisticated deception measures have a proper role to play in wartime. Well-informed speculation may occasionally give the enemy useful leads; retired officers and others in receipt of official information should therefore check with MOD before accepting invitations from the media. A system of intensive briefings of journalists will help to build a relationship of trust and encourage them to protect militarily damaging information.

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Chapter 6

16. The report then makes a series of recommendations for dealing with three specific contingencies: a period of transition to major war in Europe; major conventional war; and limited conflicts. The period following any nuclear strike is considered to be beyond the scope of the study.

17. The report concludes that in a period of mounting East-West tension, some restriction of the circulation of military information might be necessary both to prevent war and, if it broke out, to ensure military effectiveness. A good response would probably be obtained from a voluntary arrangement with the media. But if the Government believed more were needed it would be for them to judge whether legislation would be politically acceptable. Censorship of Service correspondence and of civilians serving in vital areas should begin in this period.

18. In major conventional war, there should be a discretionary censorship system for the media at home similar to that operated in the last war. Voluntary submission of material should apply to both British and foreign journalists, but the latter's international telephone and telex calls would be selectively monitored. A system should be provided under which international telephone and telex calls to and from the United Kingdom could be regulated. Authorised users should include the media. Censorship of private mail, freight and travellers leaving the country should be considered in the light of conditions prevailing at the time. "Cables" could be censored by stationing censors in the cable offices. In the field, an accreditation "bargain" should be struck with war correspondents, involving the provision of certain facilities in return for the acceptance of censorship.

19. In limited conflicts, there should be no formal censorship system at home; but there would be merit in providing an improved advisory service for journalists, based on the D Notice system. In the field, an accreditation "bargain" with war correspondents should again apply. Service correspondence should normally be censored.

20. The report concludes by recommending that British Governments pay much more attention not only to the "negative" side of information policy - protection; but also to the "positive" side - improving the quality, status and training of information staff and building a good relationship with the media.

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2.

THE PROTECTION OF MILITARY
INFORMATION

Report of the Study Group
on
Censorship

Chairman:
General Sir Hugh Beach, GBE, KCB, MC

November 1983

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MEMBERS OF THE STUDY GROUP

General Sir Hugh Beach, GBE, KCB, MC (Chairman)

Mr John Grant

Mr John Groves, CB, OBE

Mr David Holmes

Mr Donald Horobin

Mr Peter J Hudson, CB

Mr Chapman Pincher

Mr Norman Reddaway, CBE

Mr John Thompson, CBE

Rear Admiral Anthony Whetstone, CB

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FOREWORD

This report considers how the Government should protect military information immediately prior to or during the conduct of operations.

We approached our task with an open mind and certainly did not presume that censorship would be necessary. But our reading of history showed that again and again the same requirements have arisen in times of conflict, and the same lessons have had to be re-learnt. We have devised schemes which we hope would be practical in the various contingencies that might arise in future. We do not claim that they are water-tight, but we reject the argument that because we cannot protect everything we should try to protect nothing.

Nor do we believe that the work should stop there. Plans are no substitute for well-trained and high-calibre people; or for a generally greater awareness by Government of the importance of sensible handling of military information. We hope that considerably more attention will be paid to this whole question in future.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

To the Right Honourable Michael Heseltine MP, Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Defence.

Terms of reference

1. We were appointed by you in February 1983 with the following terms of reference:

"To consider, not least in the light of experience during the Falkland Islands operations, whether any new measures, including the introduction of a system of censorship, are necessary in order to protect military information immediately prior to or during the conduct of operations."

2. We established with your officials at the outset that we were not expected to look at "security at source" - that is, how the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and those who work for it should protect sensitive military information which it is practicable to confine to a relatively small circle of recipients. We did not therefore specifically consider such matters as the encryption of classified material in transit, counter-espionage or the prevention of leaks. Our task was to consider how to protect information which might become available to representatives of the media, to ordinary citizens or to individual Servicemen, but would not necessarily be known to the enemy. Nor did we look at what arrangements might be necessary to protect military information in the event of a nuclear war. The unpredictable conditions which would obtain following a nuclear strike would pose problems of a scale which would make the subjects on which we have been asked to advise all but irrelevant.

3. The establishment of our study group was welcomed by the House of Commons Defence Committee (HCDC) in its report on The Handling of Press and Public Information during the Falklands Conflict (hereinafter called, for convenience, "The HCDC Report").⁽¹⁾ In paragraph 122 of that report, the Committee said:

(1) HMSO 17-1 and II, 8 December 1982. Page lx. Conclusion (xxi)

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"We consider that, although practical considerations are important, the Ministry of Defence's approach should be based on an appreciation of the aims of any system of censorship, the benefits and penalties which arise from it and the acceptable limits to which censorship can be taken in a free society. If, as we believe, censorship can be justified, there should be no reason to be unnecessarily reticent or dilatory in establishing the framework for its application or in explaining its rationale to representatives of the media."

Method of work

4. We began with an open mind and certainly did not presume that censorship would automatically be the answer to the problem. Although the event which had led immediately to our appointment was the Falkland Islands conflict, our remit was to conduct a wide-ranging study. We were very conscious that, in many respects, the Falklands campaign presented fewer and simpler security problems than almost any other conflict in which this country might become involved.

5. We met for the first time in February and decided on a programme of work designed to enable us to report in the Autumn, as requested by your officials. We held 20 meetings in all, of which 9 were taken up in hearing oral evidence. A select bibliography of published sources which we consulted is appended at Annex A.

Call for written evidence

6. Besides commissioning various papers from Government Departments, we invited views from the media. A letter was sent out early in March to all of the national newspapers and broadcasting organisations, the provincial press associations, and some foreign and Commonwealth media bodies and agencies. We wrote direct to 59 addressees, and our letter was re-circulated by the Newspaper Society to a number of regional editors. The letter listed a series of questions, given in Annex B, on which we were interested in hearing media views.

7. We now realise that some of these questions may have been misleading. They were based on the Falklands experience, which our later studies proved to be even less typical than we had originally imagined. For example, we were unaware how exceptional had been the Falklands practice of vetting war correspondents' copy both in the field and again in this country: in all previous conflicts involving British troops, the field censorship and home censorship systems were discrete; and, except in very limited circumstances, once copy had been cleared in the field it was not subjected to re-vetting in London.

8. We also encountered considerable confusion as to terminology. What exactly was meant, for example, by the terms "mandatory censorship" and "editorial discretion"? Many replies which at first sight seemed diametrically opposed turned out on further examination to have much in common. We were constantly referred to the system which operated in this country during the Second World War; but this, as we discovered, was neither mandatory in the full sense of the word, nor completely discretionary (see definitions in paragraph 14 below). The consequence was that it was used by some as an example of a mandatory system; and by others as a precedent for allowing editors discretion. It is described in greater detail in Chapter 3.

9. We received in all 74 replies from the media. These are listed at Annex C. We have carefully considered every one of them and wish to record our thanks to all those who took the time and trouble to reply.

Visits by the study group

10. In addition to requesting written evidence, we consulted a number of experts. A sub-group visited the headquarters of NATO, SHAPE⁽¹⁾ and AFCENT⁽²⁾ to talk to military commanders and British officials there. A second sub-group visited Israel to see for itself the way in which the highly-praised Israeli system operated. Familiarisation visits were also made to the Daily Express and the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) Television Centre. We are most grateful to all those who helped us, a list of whom is to be found at Annex D.

(1) Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe

(2) Allied Forces Central Europe

Oral evidence

11. We also wished both to examine expert witnesses on points of detail and to give other interested parties an opportunity to express their opinions to us personally. We therefore interviewed a selection of people with experience in reporting conflicts; and in controlling, formulating and handling military information policy. A list of organisations and individuals who came before the study group is at Annex E.

12. We should have liked to interview all those who offered to see us, but time did not permit. We believe, nonetheless, that we saw a representative selection. Views ranged widely, from those who opposed any form of censorship to those who believed that in wartime a mandatory system would be essential. Most, however, favoured a carefully defined and limited censorship.

Lay-out of report

13. This report is divided into five main sections. Chapter 2 is a general discussion of the question of protecting military information; Chapter 3 describes the practice adopted in past operations involving British Armed Forces, and gives accounts of American practice in Vietnam and of the system used in Israel; Chapter 4 discusses developments over the last four decades; Chapter 5 draws some general principles from past practice and the present context; Chapter 6 attempts to relate these principles more specifically to future conflicts in which British forces might become involved. A summary of conclusions and recommendations is contained in Chapter 7.

Definitions

14. Because of the difficulties we have encountered with terminology, we believe it may be useful to set out here our understanding of what is meant by the term "censorship". As we understand it, censorship falls into two main categories:

- a. the rigorous form of censorship under which individuals or institutions are required to submit material to a Censorship organisation before it is published or otherwise distributed, dissemination without permission

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itself being an infringement: we refer to this process in our report as mandatory censorship;

b. the system under which specific authorisation is not required before material is disseminated, but the Government may impose penalties if the material contravenes certain regulations. This may be coupled with the establishment of a Censorship organisation, to which submission is voluntary, to advise on whether material is likely to be in breach of the regulations (in effect, the system used in the United Kingdom during the last war). In our report we use the phrase discretionary censorship to denote this process.

Throughout this report, we have used "Censorship" to denote the Censorship Department or Organisation, and "censorship" for the process of censoring. We use the terms "Press censorship" to denote censorship of both the Press and electronic media; and "Postal and Telecommunications (or Telegraph) censorship" to mean the censorship of private individuals.

15. A separate glossary of technical terms is appended at Annex F.

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CHAPTER 2

MILITARY INFORMATION AND CENSORSHIP

Military information

16. The first question which we needed to address was the meaning of the term "military information". Information emanating from the battlefield itself could be relatively simply categorised: subjects such as operational plans, capabilities, state of readiness, locations of units, tactics and techniques, movements, casualties and intelligence information are quite readily identifiable, even to the layman, as being of military significance.

17. When it came, however, to the home base the problem of definition became more confusing. The type of information listed in the previous paragraph is, of course, no less "military" when it emanates from home. But it may often be obtained from diverse sources, and much of it will be available to the general public, albeit probably in a disconnected way. By piecing together fragments of the jigsaw, an enemy's intelligence service may gain a valuable picture of plans and capabilities. To take one example, the activation of a Royal Air Force Forward Operating Base might be deduced not only from obvious factors such as the arrival of aircraft and ground convoys, but also from such apparently insignificant details as an increase in the number of civilian road tankers delivering aviation fuel, or a marked upsurge in the consumption of foodstuffs in the area.

18. On a more general level, details of food, oil or medical stocks in the United Kingdom would also be of major significance to an enemy trying to assess how much longer his opponent could hold out. Such apparently "civilian" matters thus take on a strategic significance in wartime, even though they fall outside any orthodox definition of the term "military information". This applies particularly when the home base is itself under threat; but there may also be instances in a limited war when otherwise civilian information might help the enemy in furthering his military effort.

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19. The argument for the protection of information which might be of value, no matter how slight, to the enemy must not, however, be pressed too far. For in an arduous and agonising war, no democratic nation could be expected to fight in an information vacuum. A balance must be struck between the needs of security and the desirability of keeping the public informed. The inherent disadvantage which this places on a democratic country in conflict with a totalitarian enemy who has complete control over the means of communication is part of the price we pay for living in a free and open society.

20. It follows that, other than those matters listed in paragraph 16, we do not believe there can be any simple definition of the term "military information". Precisely what facts will be of use to the enemy will vary according to the conflict itself and the stage it has reached. It would not therefore be realistic to lay down any hard and fast rules. In time of conflict the onus must rest on Government to determine what information needs to be protected.

Availability of information to the enemy

21. The second question which we addressed was how much "military information", however defined, would already be available to the enemy in wartime. Some of those submitting evidence to us argued, for example, that there was now very little information which a sophisticated enemy would not already have gleaned, either by using satellites or from more traditional methods of spying.

22. We believe that this is too simple a view. Observation satellites have their limitations: vagaries of weather and atmosphere impose physical limits on what may be seen, notwithstanding continuing improvements; satellites can, moreover, only look in detail at one area at a time, and a very large number would be needed to encompass a whole theatre of operations, let alone the whole of a home base; in addition, the ability to distinguish details may be poor, and results may not always be very precise. Satellites cannot, in any event, see into men's minds, or into buildings, hangars and bunkers. Such matters as operational plans, the state of morale, capabilities of equipment and new developments can only be discovered by human intervention.

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23. As to the latter, spies may be targetted not only on direct sources of information but also on secondary sources: for instance, newspapers, television bulletins or radio hams. If valuable information is consistently disseminated through these sources, the enemy's task is considerably simplified. Thus if a local newspaper, radio or television station were freely reporting the arrival and departure of ships from port, an enemy agent (or his master at home) would need to do no more than record the information from the comfort of an armchair.

24. The practical consequence of making low-level intelligence readily available to an enemy is that his intelligence services are thereby enabled to devote more time to gathering high-level data. If, therefore, such information can be protected, a useful service will have been performed.

Means of protection

25. What means, then, other than "security at source" are open to a Government for protecting military information?

- First, there is simple exhortation ("careless talk costs lives"), accompanied by guidance as to the kind of information which needs to be protected. The peacetime D Notice system⁽¹⁾ is an example of such guidance.
- Second, there is the control of access by unauthorised persons to sensitive military activity and information.
- Third, is the use of deception to mislead the enemy.
- Fourth, there is the placing of restrictions on the information which individuals may pass on, whether by some form of vetting of material, or by restricting channels of communication: in other words, censorship.

(1) For a full discussion of The D Notice System, see the House of Commons Third Report from the Defence Committee, Session 1979-80, HC773 640i-v.

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26. The effectiveness of exhortation relies very much on goodwill. It necessarily entails a readiness on the part of Government to release as much information as possible consistent with security needs, to explain its actions to the general public and to maintain good relations with the media. The control of access is a very important method of protecting military information, but it can never be the complete solution. As has already been noted, there are many items of potentially sensitive information to which access cannot be wholly controlled. The use of deception is a traditional wartime practice. In the last war, for example, elaborate signal exercises and deployments of dummy ships and vehicles were employed to mislead the Germans about our plans for D-Day.

27. We shall have more to say about these issues in Chapters 5 and 6 of this report. But for the present we focus on the question of censorship.

Censorship

28. Censorship has a bad name in Western societies. By derivation, and by centuries of use, the term itself has come to connote suppression of opinion or restriction of the free communication of fact. In a democracy it is accepted that there should be freedom of expression, and that the public needs to have as much information as possible in order to assess the proposals and actions of those elected to represent it. The right of the individual, and of the media, to question Government policies is fundamental to the working of Britain's form of democracy. The media play a particularly valuable part not only in buttressing Parliament's role in calling Governments to account but also in providing one of the channels through which the public's views may be made known to those in power. Censorship by its very nature reduces the value of the media in both these roles.

29. In war, however, and particularly in a war of national survival, new factors come into play. The protection of information which, if it reached the enemy, might hinder the efficient prosecution of operations, put lives at risk and ultimately prejudice the defence of the realm then becomes of vital importance. We found that the majority of media representatives replying to our questionnaire shared this view, although opinions varied as to the exact

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conclusions to be drawn. As noted in paragraph 12 many supported the introduction of some form of Government censorship in wartime. Those who objected did so principally for the following reasons:

- First, that few, if any, journalists would ever willingly publish information which would put lives at risk or damage operations.
- Second, that modern communications would render impossible any attempt to carry out effective censorship.
- Third, that censorship would be abused by Government, its bounds being extended beyond what was legitimate in military terms.
- Fourth, that in any war in Europe there would be little point in the United Kingdom's seeking to apply censorship unless the policy were concerted throughout the NATO Alliance, and that this might not prove possible.

30. In an effort to establish how substantial these objections were, we looked first at a number of recent conflicts around the world and then at the present scene. The next two chapters describe what we found.

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CHAPTER 3

LESSONS OF RECENT HISTORY

31. Although our terms of reference enjoined us to look particularly at the Falklands campaign, we thought that other conflicts would have as much, if not more, to tell us. We therefore studied the major conflicts of recent history to see what lessons might be learned.

Conflicts involving British Forces

32. Conflicts in which British forces have been involved this century may be divided broadly into three categories:

- Wars in which national survival was at stake (the two world wars).
- Limited conflicts in distant parts of the world, normally involving cross-border operations against an enemy in at least divisional strength (Korea 1950-53; Suez 1956; Falklands 1982).
- Low intensity operations, either overseas or in the United Kingdom (Cyprus 1955-59; Borneo 1962-66; Radfan and Aden 1964-67; Northern Ireland 1969-).

33. Although we gleaned much of interest from our study of the First World War, all the lessons derived during it were applied or, more often, re-learned during the Second. Since, moreover, the locus classicus of a censorship system in a war of national survival is that of the Second World War, we begin by describing this in some detail.

Second World Wara. Home censorship in the Second World War

34. In the last war, a full censorship system operated within the United Kingdom itself. The sanction which underpinned it consisted of a Defence Regulation, applicable to all citizens, making it an offence to obtain, record,

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communicate, publish or have in one's possession information on certain subjects without Government permission. The list of prohibited subjects, or "stop list", included not only specific items of a military nature, but also a catch-all phrase: "any other matter whatsoever information as to which would or might be directly or indirectly useful to an enemy".

35. The regulation (No.3(1)) also contained, however, a clause to the effect that no person would be found guilty of an offence if he proved that his action "was not likely to prejudice the defence of the realm or the efficient prosecution of the war". (The full text of Defence Regulation 3(1) is reproduced at Annex G.) This meant, as far as the British Press were concerned, that the Government had no power to prohibit the publication of a specific piece of news, nor to require that any item be submitted to the Censorship before publication. For an editor to ignore the censor's guidance was not an offence in itself; prejudice to the defence of the realm had to be proved against him. On the other hand, provided he followed the censor's advice, the "Passed for Publication" stamp afforded full protection from prosecution.

(i) Press censorship

36. To help editors in determining which items should be submitted for censorship, extensive guidance was issued in the shape of "Defence Notices". The first edition of these Notices was prepared without consultation with the Press and was voluminous. By the end of 1939 the Notices had been revised with the help of the Newspaper and Periodical Emergency Council, and an agreed edition issued. Their purpose was threefold: they informed the Press about matters which could be freely published (for example, any photographs contained in Jane's Fighting Ships); they were a guide to matters on which the Censorship's advice should be sought before publication; and they designated the subjects which were regarded as intrinsically secret, the Censorship aim being, therefore, to prevent all reference to them.

37. At various times during the war the question whether British editors should be obliged to submit to censorship came under discussion. Many in Government felt that the system was not tight enough; the Press was organised on a basis of intense and high-speed competition, and any advantage gained with impunity

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by one newspaper through carelessness or deliberate breach of Censorship Regulations imperilled enforcement generally.

38. In the summer of 1940, three possible schemes for compulsory censorship were considered by the War Cabinet:

- a scheme whereby no news on a list of prohibited subjects might be published without having passed the censor;
- a scheme which would prohibit publication of any matter on a list of defined subjects except official communiques; and
- a "Censorship Board", which would issue directions binding on newspapers but rely on editors to carry them out; thus the work of passing material through the Censorship would be abolished.

39. We have been impressed by the fact that at the moment when the survival of the British nation was most directly imperilled, all these proposals for compulsory censorship were rejected: the first because it would have involved such a vast multiplication of staff as to be impracticable (by the end of the war over 400 people were involved in the Press Censorship alone); the second because it would have destroyed the diversity of the British Press; and the third because it was unanimously opposed by the Press themselves. The solution adopted was to issue a tighter set of Defence Notices, and to set up a small department of scrutineers to scan the Press for breaches of the Regulations. In fact, although some 400,000 different issues of newspapers were published during the war, only four prosecutions for infringement of the Defence Regulations were brought and 20 more were considered. "Voluntary submission" remained the practice for British editors throughout the war.

40. It should be noted, however, that not all Press censorship was voluntary. Censorship of press material destined for overseas was mandatory, and was achieved by stationing censors in the main cable offices to scrutinise all outgoing press telegrams. The reason for this lay in the belief that once a message had left the country it passed out of any control; whereas a newspaper published in the United Kingdom could, theoretically at least, be stopped

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before it was exported and therefore fell into the hands of the enemy. (The BBC was, however, allowed to censor itself).

41. Mandatory censorship also applied in certain other areas. Press representatives allowed to visit war establishments had to submit copy for censorship before publication. Similarly, submission was compulsory for Press photographers wishing to take photographs of objects connected with the war. Moreover, the export of newspapers, photographs and films could be banned.

42. Another Defence Regulation was also relevant to the Press Censorship: under Defence Regulation 2D, the Home Secretary had the power to prohibit the printing, publication and distribution of any newspaper in which there was systematic publication of matter calculated to foment opposition to the successful prosecution of the war. By means of this regulation, the Daily Worker and The Week were banned for a short period; and the Daily Mirror was given a warning.

43. Special arrangements were made to ensure that useful information was not released to the enemy through Parliamentary debates. The Clerks of both Houses received copies of the Defence Notices, as well as the running instructions issued to censors themselves. This enabled them to keep a close watch on the text of questions handed in at the Table and to advise Members if the wording of the question itself, or the likely answer, might give valuable information to the enemy. The Clerks also advised the Speaker during the course of debates if any damaging information was unwittingly disclosed: in such an event, the item was deleted from the Official Report and newspaper editors were requested not to publish it. Secret sessions were also held on several occasions throughout the war.

(ii) Postal and telegraph censorship

44. The same reasoning as applied to press material also held good for commercial and private communications leaving the country, whether by mail, cable, wireless, telephone, freight or hand of traveller. All such communications were mandatorily censored by the Postal and Telegraph (P & T) Censorship, which employed some 6,000 people. They aimed to enclose the country in a

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ensorship net, as much for purposes of counter-espionage and intelligence gathering as to prevent ordinary people from inadvertently passing on damaging information. The thought was that if the net were complete, the circulation of information within the country would be rendered comparatively harmless and the need for any form of inland censorship reduced to a minimum. All international telephone calls were monitored - on one occasion the Prime Minister himself being deliberately cut off in the middle of an indiscretion. Outgoing mail and telegrams were all censored.

45. The P & T Censorship made, in addition, snap checks on internal mail and telephones. The aim of this activity was not so much to catch wrong-doers (the number of samples carried out was very small) as to bring home to people the necessity of avoiding careless talk.

46. Particularly intensive measures were taken in the early part of 1944 to prevent the leakage of information about the preparations for the invasion of the Continent then under way. These included: the imposition on certain outward mails of artificial periods of delay; intensifying the examination of outward European mails - including the temporary withdrawal of diplomatic privilege from all neutral and allied diplomats and Governments in Great Britain except the Americans and Russians; a ban on the export of all evening newspapers and provincial and London non-daily newspapers; and severe restrictions on travel. Most of these measures were lifted after D-Day.

b. Field censorship in the Second World War

47. Censorship in the field applied both to war correspondents accompanying the troops and to Servicemen themselves.

(i) Field Press censorship

48. War correspondents were required to submit material for censorship as a condition of accreditation. They were issued with a handbook entitled "Regulations for Press Representatives", setting out the conditions under which they would operate. This has, in fact, continued in use (under the title "Regulations for Correspondents") with only minor amendments down to this day. The

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last occasion of its operational use was the Falklands campaign, when the 1958 version was resuscitated.

49. The "stop list" for war correspondents forbade reference to matters such as the composition and location of forces, troop movements, operational orders, criticism of a personal nature, plans, casualties, organisation, place names, camouflage methods, and names or numbers of formations and units. An extract from the "Regulations for Press Representatives" for 1942 is included at Annex H.

50. War correspondents' reports were censored in the theatre of operations, sometimes both at Corps level and at rear Headquarters, before they were allowed to be transmitted back to this country. But there was normally no re-censoring once they reached the United Kingdom. Of course, if an editor himself had doubts about some part of a report, he could submit it to the Home Press Censorship; and in one set of instructions for field censors we found a provision for any article about which the censor had doubts to be referred by him to the Home Censorship. "Double vetting" in London was not, however, carried out as a matter of course.

(ii) Field Service censorship

51. Censorship was imposed on Servicemen's correspondence not only while they were on active service in the theatre of war but also on receipt of a final embarkation order, on a long sea-voyage, or "if ordered". The principal aim of the censorship was to prevent correspondence being used to transmit information of value to the enemy; and to stop souvenirs in the shape of enemy equipment or documents of possible intelligence use being sent home by unauthorised persons. This was a Unit responsibility, with checks at higher levels.

52. It was forbidden for Servicemen to include in correspondence information which could help the enemy about British or allied forces; to make criticisms calculated to bring British or allied forces into disrepute; or to make remarks on enemy actions which might encourage the enemy or undermine morale. In addition, they were prohibited from using codes or cyphers; from sending post-cards, pictures or films without authority; from communicating directly with

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the Press; or from corresponding with strangers. An extract from a Field Service Pocket Book of 1939 is reproduced at Annex I.

Lessons of Press censorship in the Second World War

53. Little has come down to us of how well, or badly, the Field Press Censorship operated. But we do have information about the Press Censorship at home. In a summary of wartime experience prepared in the Chief Press Censor's Office before it was disbanded a number of lessons are noted. We would draw attention to the following.

54. In the first place, the censors' activities were confined to information which, if published, would aid the enemy to further his military effort. It was decided early on that the Censorship's function was simply to elucidate the Defence Regulations and not to act as a general Government adviser to the newspapers as to what it was or was not desirable for them to publish. For reasons explained in Chapter 2 of this report, the definition of information which would aid the enemy in his military effort was necessarily extensive. But the censors were not, for example, allowed to be guided by speculations as to whether publication might assist enemy propaganda. Nor were they responsible for sifting the truth or falsity of information submitted to them. The Censorship in fact spent much of the war fighting off the Intelligence and Security directorates, Ministers and others who wished to apply more stringent rules. The solution, according to the Censorship summary, might have been to appoint more authoritative representatives of the Service Departments to head their Censorship detachments, and to vest in them the full power to scrutinise and, if necessary, overrule the requirements of the "security" people.

55. Secondly, for a short period there was an attempt to impose "political" censorship on the despatches of overseas correspondents working in the United Kingdom, by stopping messages likely to cause grave disharmony between us and other friendly countries. It proved exceedingly difficult to agree ground-rules and the attempt was finally abandoned in 1944. After the war it was felt that the policy had simply alienated the sympathy of the correspondents themselves and created suspicion outside this country.

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56. A third lesson was the need for the Censorship to secure the confidence of the Press, by showing its intention to be fair and sensible; by reaching decisions promptly, communicating them clearly and applying them impartially. Speed and deftness were essential, even though this might involve lavish communications equipment and an apparent over-provision of personnel. The censors themselves should be carefully chosen, be given clear instructions as to what they were to do and the limit of their functions and have an understanding of the nature and conditions of Press work.

Home censorship after the Second World War

57. In 1946 the responsibility for contingency planning for P & T censorship was transferred from the Ministry of Information to the Home Office; subsequently, in 1957, it was moved to the MOD. Planning for Press censorship remained the responsibility of the Central Office of Information (COI), under the policy guidance of the MOD. Commenting on the continuance of a shadow Censorship in 1953, Sir Edwin Herbert, Director-General Designate Censorship Department, said:

".... if ever we had to take part in [censorship] again we would very much rather stay in and keep the thing going than perhaps go out for 15 or 20 years and then have to start from scratch all over again This was the trouble between 1918 and 1938; there was no continuity at all."

58. The British Government's plans to continue the Second World War system in any future major war in fact survived until the early 1960s. But then a review was undertaken. At that time NATO policy was almost entirely dependent on the overwhelming nuclear superiority of the United States and was based on the strategy of "massive retaliation". The logical consequence of such a strategy was that, should a major war break out it would very quickly become nuclear. This led the Government to conclude that there was little point in continuing its plans for wartime censorship, and in 1962 the shadow P & T Censorship Department was wound up. The plans for a Home Press Censorship continued slightly longer but also eventually fell into disuse.

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59. Since that time there has been a major change in NATO strategy. With the enormous expansion of Soviet nuclear capability, the strategy of massive retaliation lost credibility. A new and more flexible strategic concept was accordingly developed and adopted by NATO Ministers in December 1967. The basis of the concept was that NATO should be able to deter, and (if deterrence failed) to counter, military aggression of any kind and at any level. This implies a greater emphasis on conventional defence. In such circumstances the need for a system of censorship to protect information emanating from this country could once again become important.

60. Nonetheless, plans for censorship at home in major war have not been re-introduced following the change in strategy. After 20 years the expertise has now been largely lost. If we were to re-introduce censorship we would need, in Sir Edwin Herbert's words, to start again from scratch.

Limited conflicts

a. At home

61. In the limited conflicts in which British forces have been involved since the last war, the general practice has been to impose censorship only in the field. At home there has been no formal censorship.

62. At the time of the Suez crisis informal guidance was given to editors, by means of what was termed a "pseudo D Notice", requesting them not to publish certain types of information which might compromise "D-Day". Newly-revised D Notices had, by coincidence, been issued only days before the outbreak of the Falklands conflict, and no further formal guidance was therefore issued to editors. The D Notice Secretary remained available to answer queries, although in practice he was little used after the first few days of the campaign, particularly once the MOD vetting system - which was, in effect, an extension of the field censorship (see paragraph 66) - had been set in motion. His function was confined to ringing individual editors on occasions when it was known that sensitive material had leaked, to bring D Notice influence to bear in requesting them not to publish. He also made representations to editors after they had published material which was seriously contrary to D Notice guidance.

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b. Field Press censorship in limited conflicts

(i) Korea

63. In the early days of the Korean war there was no censorship of war correspondents' reports. Instead, there applied a voluntary code of war reporting designed to protect military secrets. As time passed, however, more and more subjects were added to the "stop list", and some journalists were temporarily banned because they were thought to be giving aid and comfort to the enemy. Correspondents eventually became so confused that they asked for official censorship to be applied.⁽¹⁾

64. In December 1950 General MacArthur's headquarters ended the voluntary system and imposed full military censorship on news messages, broadcasts, magazine articles and photographs. The penalty for infringement was withdrawal of facilities or, in extreme cases, court-martial.⁽²⁾ Since the military had complete control over telecommunications, correspondents were obliged to comply.

(ii) Suez

65. Censorship of war correspondents' reports at Suez was carried out from a Joint Press Censorship Unit in Cyprus, to which material was sent by air from the theatre of operations. There were, however, many problems. In the early stages, for example, much copy went astray, and the Army eventually arranged for an officer to meet the aircraft on arrival and accompany correspondents' material to the cable head.

(iii) Falklands

66. The detailed arrangements made for handling the media during the Falklands conflict have already been the subject of a full report by the House of Commons

(1) See Phillip Knightley, The First Casualty, Andre Deutsch, 1975, page 337

(2) Ibid, page 345

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Defence Committee⁽¹⁾. We do not therefore describe them here and merely draw attention to the practice of "double-vetting" correspondents' reports: that is, both in the South Atlantic and in London. The London vetting was possible because of the peculiar - and probably unrepeatable - circumstance of the military authorities' complete monopoly both over the transmission of correspondents' material from the theatre of operations to the MOD and over the location of the correspondents themselves.

c. Field Service censorship in limited conflicts

67. There was no censorship of Service correspondence in Korea. For the Suez operation, the correspondence of the British Armed Forces was subject to censorship as soon as they had left the United Kingdom. Censorship was not applied to the crews of Royal Fleet Auxiliary and merchant ships.

68. Service censorship was not applied during the Falklands campaign, Servicemen merely being advised by their officers of the need to exercise caution in their letters home. Since there was a three-week delay before mail could reach the United Kingdom from the Task Force, there was perhaps less necessity for Service censorship than might be the case in future conflicts.

69. An illustration of the inadvertent damage which could, however, occur was the leak through a Serviceman's letter of the news about the loss of helicopters on South Georgia during the first, abortive, SAS raid on the island. This was concealed initially because it was militarily essential to keep the Argentine forces in ignorance that the attack on South Georgia was imminent, and later because the practice of landing special forces in advance of ordinary troops was to set the pattern for the re-taking of the Falkland Islands themselves; to have revealed these tactics might well, therefore, have prejudiced subsequent operations. By the time the news leaked from the Serviceman's letter, little damage could be done; but without the three-week delay in mail delivery, the consequences might have been serious.

(1) The Handling of Press and Public Information during the Falklands Conflict.

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Lessons of Press censorship in limited conflicts

70. The handling of the media was unsatisfactory during both the Suez and the Falklands conflicts, although criticism on this score at Suez was overshadowed by the more general controversy surrounding the operation itself.

a. Suez

71. An Army report written shortly after the Suez campaign complained generally of the lack of foresight shown in the creation and handling of the Public Relations Service connected with the operation. It attributed the difficulties encountered at Port Said principally to: the poor quality and lack of experience of officers selected for the Army Public Relations unit; the lack of suitable experience of some of the correspondents; the overloading of the Public Relations unit beyond the limit for which it was established; and the poor standard and efficiency of communications equipment.

72. The report recommended a number of improvements for the future: namely, a panel of journalists who could be earmarked at short notice as war correspondents; greater care in the selection of Public Relations officers; and improved press communications. This all makes familiar reading. Very similar lessons were re-learnt in the Falklands.

b. Falklands

73. In the HCDC report on The Handling of Press and Public Information during the Falklands Conflict, a number of lessons are drawn⁽¹⁾. Those which we believe to be most pertinent to our study we paraphrase as follows:

- the need for British Governments to appreciate the importance of propaganda (Conclusion (i));
- the importance of applying common sense in assessing what are operational secrets; when there are conflicting views on the subject the military view must prevail (Conclusion (ii));

(1) Pages lix-lxi

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- the military value of withholding the whole truth and of issuing "mis-information", but the need for care in so doing (Conclusion (iii));
- the need for an experienced public relations officer at the head of the MOD PR organisation (Conclusion (vi));
- the need for further work on accreditation arrangements (Conclusion (ix));
- the value of off-the-record briefings (Conclusion (xv));
- the importance of greater understanding in the Armed Forces of the nature of media work (Conclusion (xvii));
- the need for information matters to form part of planning for war and of exercises (Conclusions (xx) and (xxvi));
- the need for a senior serving officer to head information activities of all three Services in the operational area (Conclusion (xxii)).

Many of these recommendations were accepted by the MOD in its observations on the HCDC Report⁽¹⁾.

74. Several more lessons have since been suggested to us by those directly involved at the time. These were that: better advice should have been given to Commanders-in-Chief on relations with the media; there should have been a clearer view on what to censor, how and where; and the Services needed a greater awareness of other facets of fighting (or preventing) a war: namely, the diplomatic and international dimensions.

(1) The Handling of Press and Public Information During the Falklands Conflict, Observations presented by the Secretary of State for Defence on the First Report from the Defence Committee, House of Commons papers 17-I-II 1982-83. Cmnd 8820, March 1983

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Low intensity operations

75. In the majority of low intensity operations involving British forces since the last war, no formal censorship has normally applied. Instead, various preventive measures have been taken. The military authorities have attempted to withhold as much sensitive information as possible by controlling access to information and activities ("security at source"); whenever the operation was particularly sensitive, cover stories have been invented to mislead the opponent; and occasional appeals have been made to the media not to disclose operationally damaging information.

76. As was pointed out on several occasions during the HCDC enquiry, the Army and Royal Marines have learnt a great deal from their experiences in internal security operations, particularly in Northern Ireland. The most important lesson has been the need to adopt a positive attitude towards the media.

Conflicts not involving British Forces

77. We now consider two major conflicts of recent times in which British forces have not been involved: Vietnam and the Arab/Israel dispute.

Vietnam

78. Much has been said and written about the Vietnam conflict, and it is not our wish to add to the controversy. But in view of the comparisons drawn between the press facilities provided in the Falklands and Vietnam - in the latter's favour - by many of the correspondents giving evidence to the HCDC, it is worth investigating briefly.

79. The first point is that no formal censorship was applied. Correspondents were given two sets of ground-rules, one drawn up by the United States Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV) and the other by the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces. The "stop lists" which formed part of these rules were very similar to each other and were designed to prevent information of significant intelligence value reaching the enemy. They included the usual items one would expect to find: future plans, information on rules of engagement, logis-

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tics, movements, casualties and so on (see Annex K). Time-embargoes on the release of information were also frequently imposed by the military authorities.

80. All correspondents had to be accredited and were only accepted by the US military after they had first registered with the South Vietnamese authorities. In practice, however, this was little more than a formality. Although there was no formal censorship a loose form of control did operate, as in the early days of the Korean war, in that any correspondent breaching the ground-rules could be discredited. This happened on very few occasions.

81. The facilities provided for correspondents were lavish - indeed, according to some US military commentators, too lavish. Flights in aircraft and helicopters were often provided at the expense of military movement. This was, in fact, the characteristic most often highlighted by those correspondents comparing conditions in the Falklands with Vietnam.

82. None of the correspondents to whom we spoke could recall that the ground-rules had caused them any difficulty. As one⁽¹⁾ pointed out, journalists do not in any case use every piece of information available to them, for a variety of reasons. Nonetheless, no-one would maintain that all went smoothly between the military and the media in Vietnam. There was distrust on both sides. Correspondents frequently suspected that they were being "sold a rug"⁽²⁾, and many of the younger ones lacked the experience to understand why it was that officers could not always tell them the whole truth. It has been claimed that the absence of censorship itself inhibited the US forces from taking correspondents into their confidence. One noted war correspondent, Drew Middleton, comparing the Second World War with Vietnam, is reported as saying: "As long as all copy was submitted to censors before transmission, people in the field, from generals down, felt free to discuss top secret material with reporters. On three trips to Vietnam I found generals and everyone else far more wary of talking to reporters precisely because there was no censorship." ⁽³⁾

(1) Mr Peter Osnos, Washington Post.

(2) Idem

(3) Letter from Drew Middleton to Phillip Knightley, quoted in The First Casualty, pages 315-316.

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Some analysts have even gone so far as to suggest that this wariness contributed to the estrangement of the media and, eventually, of American public opinion.

83. This brings us to the most difficult question surrounding the media coverage of Vietnam. It has often been argued, notably by Mr Dean Rusk in a recent television interview, that it was the showing of distressing or "gory" pictures on television that turned the American public against the war. As Mr Rusk said in that interview: "The Vietnam struggle was the first serious war fought on television, in everyone's living room, every day. Now, war is the hideous aspect of the human race; it's mean, dirty, ugly, painful If our Congress, God forbid, ever had to consider this kind of operation again [it] must, at the very beginning, deal with the question of censorship."⁽¹⁾ We have some sympathy with this view. There is little doubt that the showing of pictures which brought the full horrors of war into people's living rooms contributed to disillusionment with the war. In our view, however, that is only half the story.

84. Coupled with the pictures went an almost universally hostile editorial tone. In part, this arose from the anti-Establishment attitude prevalent in the 1960s and 1970s, which was systematically exploited by the Communist authorities. But it also owed much to the fact that the war was being fought thousands of miles from home, on behalf of an unknown people (who were suffering gravely in the process) and for an apparently abstract cause; that it continued for the best part of 20 years with mounting casualties and little evident success; and that towards its close a large section of the American public had come to have doubts not only that the war could ever be won but also about the good faith of the US Administration itself. While we would not therefore wish to claim that the media, and especially television, played no part in the eventual collapse of support for the war, we believe that it is too easy to lay the whole emphasis on the showing of distressing pictures. The main lesson of Vietnam must surely be that support for a war will only continue as long as the public can understand, and identify with, its purpose and the methods used.

(1) "The Twentieth Century Remembered," Interview by Kenneth Harris, BBC 2, 20 August 1983.

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Israel

85. The Israeli system of handling the media was the most highly praised by witnesses giving evidence to the HCDC. We therefore decided to send a sub-group to Israel to study the system at first hand.

86. Censorship in Israel is based on the British Mandate Defence (Emergency) Regulations of 1945 (see Annex L), which have never been repealed by the Knesset. These provide that the censor may prohibit, in general or specifically, the publication of information which in his opinion is prejudicial to the defence of Israel, to public safety or public order.

87. In addition to this legal foundation, and parallel to it, there exists an agreement between the General Staff of the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) and the Committee of Editors of the Hebrew Daily Newspapers on censorship matters. According to this agreement, the sole purpose of censorship in Israel is to prevent the publication of information on security matters which might prove useful to an enemy or to the defence of the state; censorship of political matters, opinions, commentary and analysis, or on any issue not connected with the defence of the state is specifically prohibited. The agreement provides for a three-man appeal committee to deal with complaints, consisting of representatives of the military authorities, editors and the public. In practice, however, there are few such complaints: since 1949, when the agreement was first signed, there have been no more than 180 altogether.

88. Foreign correspondents are not bound by the agreement with Israeli editors but fall under the Mandate Regulations. If, therefore, they disagree with the censor it is technically open to them to appeal to the High Court. More usually, however, they find it easier to argue with him direct. This is, according to journalists to whom we spoke, a very welcome part of the Israeli system. The ability to confront the censor, discuss with him and, if necessary, re-write copy to meet his requirements is of great importance to journalists; it is, indeed, one of the factors which persuades them to co-operate. We were told by several journalists⁽¹⁾ that in countries where no such facility was provided there was a far greater temptation to "buck the system".

(1) For example, Mr Nicholas Herbert, Editorial Director, Westminster Press Ltd; and Mr David Sells, BBC TV

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89. Some monitoring of foreign correspondents' international telephone and telex calls takes place, although it is unclear whether this is carried out on a continuous or selective basis. This does not, however, appear to be the main deterrent against breaches. The normal sanction against foreigners who contravene the regulations is withdrawal of accreditation, but this rarely occurs. The Israeli authorities can make life difficult in other ways, by simply refusing facilities or by insisting that all material be submitted for censorship. Several of the correspondents to whom we spoke pointed out that it was possible to evade the censorship, but the majority preferred nonetheless to play by the rules. This was largely because the system was not felt to be oppressive, while the speed, fairness and efficiency of the Censorship itself were widely commended.

90. Although provision exists in the Defence Regulations for compulsory submission to the Censorship, in practice submission is normally left to journalists' discretion. Both Israeli editors and foreign correspondents are issued with guidance as to the subjects which should be submitted for examination. The "stop list" for Israeli editors contains some 70 subjects and includes: plans, alert situations, mobilisation, deployments, movements, Army morale and intelligence information. For foreigners the list is shorter but nonetheless comprehensive.

91. One area in which the rules are more stringent for Israelis than for foreigners is that of war casualties: identifiable pictures of wounded or dead soldiers may not be shown until the next of kin have been informed. "Gory" or distressing pictures, whether identifiable or not, may also be censored by the authorities. Censorship on grounds of morale is, in fact, an integral part of the Israeli system.

92. The Censorship operates from offices in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. In addition, crews of censors are sent out during emergencies to the four studios from which foreign TV organisations send their material abroad via satellite. No censorship is carried out in the field itself: the small size of Israel, and its consequent proximity to almost every theatre of operations, mean that the distinction between field and home Press censorship does not apply. Journalists are accompanied to the battlefield by an escort officer, who performs no

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ensorship function; they return with their material and only then may it be seen by the censor.

93. The role of the escort officers (who are usually reservists) is purely to facilitate access to the action, although they may also advise correspondents on what is likely to pass the censor. They receive intensive training: before undertaking their month's reserve duty they are not only given theoretical training but also allowed several days in the field to take over the reins from the previous incumbent. It is Israeli policy to allow journalists to see and record as much as possible on the battlefield, escort officers being secure in the knowledge that the censor provides a back-stop. This policy is particularly appreciated by the representatives of television (1) to whom we spoke; they emphasised that, whereas a journalist compiling written, and even oral, reports can insert material later, no such luxury is possible for the cameraman. For him, free access to take his film is all important.

94. Several points should be highlighted about the Israeli system. The first is that, because Israel is virtually on a permanent war footing, the Censorship has been operating continuously since 1948. It has therefore had plenty of time to develop into a smooth and efficient machine and has not been continually re-invented as in this country.

95. Secondly, the distinction between the military and the media in Israel is more blurred than almost anywhere else in the world. Everyone has served in the IDF, and reservists continue to serve for 30 days or more a year. Both escort officers and censors may be journalists by profession. The Israeli public, moreover, is keenly conscious of security. The feeling of being all on the same side is strong. This is of considerable importance when it comes to operating a semi-voluntary censorship system. The national consensus on security issues did noticeably erode following last year's invasion of the Lebanon, when for the first time in Israel's history popular opinion on the operation was divided. This led, by some journalists' accounts, to the Government's straying into the field of political censorship - to which they were unanimously opposed. But, Lebanon notwithstanding, the Israeli system has the

(1) For example, Mr Michael Nicholson, Independent Television News.

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support of the public at large and is welcomed by the majority of Israeli journalists and editors as a means of preventing them from unwittingly disclosing information potentially prejudicial to national security; foreign correspondents respect it on the whole and do not consider it worthwhile to try to breach the rules.

96. By common consent, the Israeli system works well because it is quick, efficient and manageable and encourages journalists to transmit their material. The handling of information is regarded as an integral part of the war effort.

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CHAPTER 4

THE PRESENT SCENE

97. When considering how many lessons of the past will be relevant to future conflicts, we need to look at some of the developments which have occurred in the Western world during the last four decades. These fall into three main categories: changes in society generally; changes in the number and type of media outlets; and changes in technology, particularly the improvement in the means of collecting and transmitting news. Further, there is now in Western Europe a peacetime alliance of 16 nations, bound to each other in a more closely-knit structure than has ever before existed, while yet retaining individual sovereignty. The United Kingdom's membership of the NATO Alliance will inevitably affect any arrangements which this country might make for protecting military information during a future conflict in Europe.

Social changes

98. The immense changes which have taken place in Western societies since the last world war have an important bearing on our study. To begin with, the ease of international travel and the post-war policy of many Western Governments of encouraging large-scale immigration into their countries have reduced the homogeneity which once existed and caused a fragmentation of national identity; this could in certain circumstances militate against achieving the consensus which was possible in the United Kingdom during the 1940s and is still evident to a high degree in Israel today. Moreover, we have seen two generations grow up in an atmosphere of scepticism, often amounting even to extreme cynicism, towards those in authority. In many instances, the reduction in automatic deference has been a healthy development. But in others the questioning attitude has stepped over into a rejection of any form of authority or an automatic presumption that those in power are either inept or up to no good. As one witness said to us, people have seen "one too many Watergates". In such circumstances there is a far greater need for democratic Governments to explain, persuade and encourage people to accept that certain actions need to be taken, and to show that these are for the greater good of society as a whole, rather than simply of the Government in power at the time.

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99. In these days, too, more is expected of the media. A public accustomed to open communications and fast, comprehensive, world-wide coverage is not likely to tolerate for long any unnecessary withholding of news. Whereas the experience of the Falklands, as noted in the HCDC Report⁽¹⁾ was that the general public was prepared to tolerate certain inconveniences if they contributed to the success of the campaign, this principle cannot be taken too far. For as one editor⁽²⁾ put it to us, all wars are "people's wars". Even in the last war, the importance to morale of fast, accurate news was recognised: it is much more likely to be essential in future conflicts.

100. More pessimistically, some witnesses suggested to us that there was now a large body of people, which included some journalists, who are opposed to the very survival of the kind of society in which we live and who would be prepared to take extreme action in wartime - even to the extent of publishing information which would aid the enemy - if to do so would further their own ends. Secondly, these witnesses argued, the fear of nuclear weapons is such that some people might be prepared to break the law if they believed that in so doing they would prevent war or bring it to a speedy conclusion, even at the expense of defeat.

101. We recognise the force of these arguments but are not convinced. In the 1930s there were people who held pacifist views and some who supported the introduction into this country of totalitarian government in one shape or another; and even then the anti-war movement caused fears among those in power - not least following the famous Oxford Union Debate of 1933 - about the British people's will to fight. Nonetheless in 1940 there were few, if any, who carried these views to the point of wilfully damaging the war effort. More recently, the degree of public support for the Falklands operation last year was very striking. While it would be foolish to draw from this the conclusion that the public would automatically support any future war in which a British Government might engage, we believe it is a pointer to the kind of reaction which could be expected if ever this nation's survival again came under threat. Most of those who submitted evidence to us agreed that the

(1) Paragraph 26

(2) Mr Robert Edwards, Sunday Mirror

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majority of people, not least those in the media, would not knowingly damage the war effort if this country were directly attacked or threatened.

New media outlets

102. The changes in the number and type of media outlets since the 1940s have been no less striking than the changes in society generally: a comparison is appended at Annex M. The "alternative" press and ethnic press are wholly new developments. Another significant change which may also contribute to the diversification of British society noted in paragraph 98 is the growing regionalization of media outlets. For whereas in the 1940s the British public listened in to a nation-wide broadcasting system, the last few years have seen the growth of local radio and of the "free" press - in competition with the more traditional regional press - both of which focus on local, rather than national, news. In addition, the Government is about to legislate for the development of local cable systems offering a wide range of television services.

a. Television

103. There are now four standard television channels, three of them with regional variations, including regional television news programmes. And two new developments seems likely to make this picture even more diverse: cable television and direct broadcasting by satellite (DBS).

104. Cable television will come into operation during 1984 in some 12 areas, and if it proves a success we may see as many as 100 operators providing services in various parts of the country by the end of the decade. Operators' franchises will be issued by the Cable Authority, but this body is not expected to have the same degree of editorial control over the transmission of programmes as is enjoyed by both the BBC and the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA). This means that, although the Cable Authority may lay down general guidelines and will monitor the general performance of individual operators, the main responsibility for programme content will rest with the operators themselves. It is too soon to say with confidence how news programmes will be produced. Cable systems will be required by statute to carry BBC and Independent Television News broadcasts, but the local nature of the systems will most probably

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lead to the production of programmes specialising in regional news. Independent organisations offering news and current affairs programme packages to cable operators nation-wide may also come into being.

105. The significance of these developments for the protection of military information needs to be spelled out. The advent of cable would not necessarily add to problems of protection in the field - unless cable operators decided to employ their own war correspondents - but cable programmes could be useful to the enemy if they put out news about events of military significance taking place at home. One connection with events in the field is, however, the possibility that operators will run features on "local boys" serving at the front, using information sent home to parents: we were told by the editor of one regional newspaper,⁽¹⁾ for example, that it was customary during the Falklands conflict for mothers to bring in for publication letters from sons in the South Atlantic. Such considerations apply, of course, to all the regional media.

106. The second development - DBS - will begin to be a factor from 1986, when households which are either equipped with their own satellite dish or linked in to a cable network could start receiving special BBC and IBA programmes direct via space satellite. The "footprint" of the satellite (see Annex F) which will be used to provide this service covers not only the whole of the United Kingdom but also part of the Continent (southern Scandinavia, Belgium, Netherlands, north west of Germany, much of France, north west of Spain and Portugal). Eventually any person within the area covered, provided he were a subscriber to the service and had the necessary equipment, could receive British programmes; and British viewers could pick up transmissions from other countries' satellites - including East European satellites - if their footprint touched Britain. The latter has implications for the maintenance of public morale, which are considered in Chapter 5.

(1) Mr Geoffrey Collard, Vice President Guild of British Newspaper Editors and Editor Croydon Advertiser.

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b. Local radio

107. There are at present over 70 local radio stations around the country, a figure which is likely to increase to about 100 during the next decade. All are controlled either by the BBC or by the IBA. National news comes from central sources and falls within the remit of the BBC and Independent Radio News; regional news bulletins and current affairs programmes are not produced centrally but are still subject to BBC/IBA ground-rules. One possible loophole in the context of protecting military information is the immensely popular 'phone-in programme; people ringing in to such programmes could be the means of inadvertently passing useful local information, or information from relatives in the field, to an enemy. The IBA stations do, however, already have a seven-second delay in live 'phone-in programmes to enable them to filter out libellous or obscene remarks (the so-called "profanity button"). There would be scope for its use to be extended in wartime to cover the question of sensitive military information.

c. The "alternative" press

108. The "alternative" - or "fringe" - press, which aims to give open access to information that traditional sources cannot, or will not, supply, (1) is an important part of the present scene. About 170 such publications, covering a multitude of topics, are readily available in London and in parts of the provinces, although the exact number fluctuates since many of these publications tend to be born and die with some rapidity. Their significance in the context of protecting military information is that in taking an "alternative" view some might be prepared - or even regard it as a duty - to publish information which could prove useful to the enemy.

d. Ethnic press

109. The ethnic, or minority, press has grown significantly in recent years. At present in the London area alone there are about 50 such papers (most of

(1) See: Introduction to Ways and Means, A Directory of Alternative Information, NUS Publications, January 1978.

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them weekly), some of which are distributed nationally and even internationally. Ethnic newspapers are also produced in some of the regions, for example the Birmingham and Bradford areas. They cater primarily for the Bengali, Chinese, Indian, Pakistani and West Indian communities. The majority are published in English, but some are in other languages such as Chinese or Urdu. Besides containing large sections of local news, they also cover national and international events from a minority viewpoint. Like the local media they could be the means of providing the enemy with useful information about events occurring in the region in which they are published, or with information emanating from relatives in the field.

e. "Free" press

110. The phenomenon of the "free" press is a relatively new one, but it has burgeoned in the last few years. Free local newspapers are give-away papers wholly financed by advertising. Many are no more than "free sheets" - that is, they contain advertising only; but increasingly some are coming to contain hard news and to challenge the more traditional regional press on their own ground. There are some 560 titles in existence at present. About half are members of the Association of Free Newspapers; certain others are members of the Newspaper Society; while the Guild of British Newspaper Editors contains members of both the traditional regional papers and the "free" press. But these organisations provide only a partial point of contact, since they do not cover every "free" paper; and they, of course, have no control over what is printed. The significance of these papers in the context of protecting military information is similar to that of the other local media.

Aids to news gathering and dissemination

111. The last few decades have seen a complex and revolutionary improvement in communications of all kinds, and particularly in telecommunications. Whereas in the last war the only telegraphic means of communication open to the public, in addition to the manually operated telephone system, was a primitive form of telex limited in scope and in numbers and, like the telephone system, manually operated, there is now an array of automatic communications operated both by governments and the private sector which comprises telephone, telex, facsimile

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and a fast telegraphic transmission system capable of speeds of several thousand words per minute. The trend in all modern forms of telecommunications is towards automated, high-speed, broad-band and digital links.

112. Where communications were concerned the Falklands conflict was probably unique. Few places are so remote and inaccessible to the outside world. All communications were controlled by the Armed Forces and, because they were primarily provided for military purposes, the electronic communications were limited in the amount and type of information which they could pass. There was no direct satellite facility for television pictures. No third parties were able to report; and even news from the enemy side was relatively limited.

113. The authorities might never again have such a simple task in protecting military information emanating from the field of battle. In most future conflicts satellite communications, for both radio and television, would be available, and their control would not be directly in the hands of the military; non-satellite radio transmissions, using high frequency, would also be feasible. Except in a major war in Europe, the international telephone system would also probably be in operation. We therefore looked more closely at the various means of news gathering and dissemination and considered the implications of each for the protection of military information.

a. Collection of information

114. Where once the journalist relied on pen and paper, there is now a formidable range of equipment which assists him, and others, to collect information. Speech and video recording equipments are becoming ever smaller and more portable. Microphones and recorders can now be easily concealed, allowing an outsider the theoretical possibility of recording sound without the military authorities' knowledge. Developments in the construction of movie cameras, and particularly the introduction of light-weight cameras which permit direct recording on video-tape, have been a major break-through. These cameras are valuable to journalists not only for their easy handling but also because they can play back pictures immediately and without processing: the system known as Electronic News Gathering (ENG). The product can be transmitted instantaneously via any commercial system providing a video-link. ENG cameras are not, however,

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very easily concealed, so that the chances of their being detected by the authorities are higher than those for sound recordists.

b. Transmission of Information

115. The major developments of the last few years have lain in the field of transmission of information. Of the various means mentioned in paragraph 111, we shall concentrate here on the main ones: telephone and telex. We shall also look at amateur and private radios, and at the newest means of transmitting both speech and video: satellite.

(i) Telephone and telex

116. Telephone and telex are the most commonly used methods of exchanging oral and written information. Networks are now widespread, and automatic dialling has become the norm. An idea of the immense change which has occurred in the telephone network may be gathered from the fact that, whereas 20 years ago nearly all international calls from this country went through an operator, today the figure is only three per cent. The number of international switchboard positions and operators has reduced accordingly: we were told by British Telecom (BT) that there were now only 1,000 positions left in the United Kingdom, and that these would reduce still further in a few years' time. In future, only about one in 200 international calls is likely to be handled by an operator.

117. At present about one million international telephone calls are made each day to and from the United Kingdom; this is possible because the automatic system can handle some 20,000 calls simultaneously. A manual operator can, by contrast, handle only one call every five minutes. To return to a manual system would cause impossible congestion.

118. The implications of the move to automation for the protection of military information have been serious. Whereas during the last war, as noted in Chapter 3, because of the manual nature of the system all telephone calls to and from this country could be monitored and all outgoing press telegrams from overseas correspondents could be compulsorily censored, today elaborate arrangements would need to be made if such traffic were to be controlled.

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And, in view of the vast increase in international telecommunications traffic in the last few decades, the number of censors required would need to be very high indeed (it will be recalled that there were 6,000 censors in the Postal and Telegraph Censorship even in the last war; added to these were some 120 Press censors stationed in the cable offices). This question is discussed further in paragraphs 201 to 204 and Annex O.

(ii) Amateur and private radio

119. With minor exceptions, all telephone and telex links in the United Kingdom are in the hands of two organisations - BT and the Mercury consortium. But amateur and private radios can be operated independently of telecommunications authorities. High frequency radio transmitters are now available in small suitcase size and offer good quality, long-range communications. In the right conditions and using suitable frequencies, world-wide coverage is possible. They could be used for transmitting information both from this country and from the battlefield. If "burst transmission" were used they would be extremely hard to locate. Amateur and private radios would be a major problem if a large enough number of people - whether journalists, ordinary members of the public or spies - tried to use them for transmitting sensitive military information.

(iii) Communications satellites

120. Telephone and telex messages may be physically transmitted in two ways: by cable (land-line or submarine), or through the ether. Of the latter, microwave radio may be used for shorter distances, tropospheric-scatter for moderate distances, while satellites are employed for covering longer stretches. Satellites are, of course, also increasingly being used for transmitting video: in the United States today pictures regularly travel from coast to coast by this means. New communications satellites are constantly being launched: about 100 are now either functioning or under construction around the world.

121. Satellites are, however, a relatively complex form of communication and are not open to ready use by all-comers. In order to transmit material by satellite, four things are necessary:

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- an up-station at or near the place from which the material is collected;
- a transponder on a satellite with a "footprint" in the area;
- a method of operational co-ordination with other potential users of the satellite; and
- a ground-station to receive the material at the other end.

122. All existing satellites for international communications are owned and operated by national or international agencies. The United Kingdom, through BT, currently participates in three satellite consortia: the International Telecommunications Satellite Consortium (INTELSAT), the International Maritime Satellite Organisation (INMARSAT), and the European Telecommunications Satellite Organisation (EUTELSAT). For video transmission the normal procedure has been for BT to lease time individually from the satellite consortia as and when needed by the customer, although the practice is growing, particularly with news agencies, of leasing transmission capacity permanently to allow an uninterrupted flow of information. But these transmissions are still under the technical control of BT - or will, in due course, be under the control of Mercury communications - and a degree of Government regulation would theoretically be possible.

123. For up-stations the position differs substantially as between speech and video. One-man portable transmitters for speech are already available and could be used either from offices in the home base or from the battlefield. A surreptitious user would not necessarily be detected by the authorities. But he would, of course, need to make operational arrangements with the controlling consortium or satellite owner in order to use the satellite itself.

124. Although mobile up-stations for ENG are already in use, they require vehicles and two or three staff. One-man portable systems still need considerable development but could be available within the next few years. The size of present up-stations means that any individual taking moving pictures in the field and attempting to transmit direct from there in real time via satellite would be very obvious (although slow-speed transmission of pictures through a

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portable transmitter is a technical possibility it would be very vulnerable to interception). Back-packs could be used for transmitting by microwave to a local satellite up-station and thence onwards; but, of course, advance arrangements would have to be made with the up-station to handle the material.

125. As to ground-stations, the receiving equipment for sound is relatively cheap and easy to obtain, although the more efficient equipment needs to be housed in an expensive and permanent installation. Large ground-stations are now also becoming less essential for video, as the DBS development, described in paragraph 106, illustrates.

(iv) Encryption

126. One further technical question should perhaps be considered, since it has implications for determining the place at which military information is best protected. This is encryption, or the process of encyphering signals so that they cannot be read by unauthorised persons. Although many organisations already encrypt their material for commercial reasons - to prevent rivals from stealing it - this is not standard practice, and most journalistic copy could be expected to be transmitted in clear. It would thus be theoretically possible, especially in a war in Europe, for the enemy to listen, or look, in to transmissions of war correspondents operating from the field of battle and so gain valuable information. In practice he is very likely to have higher priority targets and, even with the vast resources devoted to interception by the Warsaw Pact, the volume of information would probably confuse rather than enlighten; nonetheless the only safe assumption is that once information leaves the battlefield, unless travelling by secure means, it is already "blown". If, therefore, control is to be undertaken it is best done on the spot.

The NATO dimension

127. As the introduction to this chapter pointed out, any major war in Europe would be fought in conjunction with our NATO Allies. How they plan to protect military information is thus highly relevant to our own consideration of the subject, as are their plans for handling public information generally.

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128. We can, of course, expect all our Allies to exercise "security at source". But whether all would introduce censorship is more doubtful. Censorship is specifically forbidden by law in some European constitutions, and the political sensitivity of the subject in peacetime has tended to preclude discussion of it, even on a contingency basis for war. Little thought has been devoted by NATO to how information should be handled in the field.

129. Moreover, in those countries closest to the Warsaw Pact, "the field" and "home" would very probably be synonymous. There would therefore be large numbers of local journalists who could be expected to see, and report, a variety of facts connected with Allied preparations in a period of transition to war, or with the operations during a war itself. Ordinary local inhabitants would also pick up details which they might inadvertently pass on. And enemy agents would doubtless be operating.

130. Of our European Allies, only the Dutch have plans for a fully-fledged Home Press Censorship to be introduced in a major emergency. The US Administration has a similar plan⁽¹⁾, although its present status is unclear. This includes theoretical provision for some control of postal services and telecommunications. Discussions about the latter in NATO have focused on what would happen to the telecommunications systems in wartime. But no firm agreement on control of telecommunications has yet been reached.

131. The implications of all this, and of the other developments described above, are considered further in the next two chapters.

(1) See: US Government Information Policies and Practices - Problems of Congress in Obtaining Information from the Executive Branch. Hearings before a sub-committee of the Committee on Government Operations. House of Representatives, 92nd Congress, second session, May-June 1972.

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CHAPTER 5

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

132. What conclusions have we been able to draw from the preceding two chapters, and, in particular, what light do they throw on the main objections to censorship noted in paragraph 29 of Chapter 2?

The case for censorship

133. The most striking feature of the conflicts described in Chapter 3 is that in all of them, with the sole exception of Vietnam, some form of official censorship of the media was found to be necessary. We have concluded that this was for good reasons, and that the objections to censorship do not, for the most part, stand up.

134. The first objection was that few, if any, journalists would ever willingly publish information which would put lives at risk or damage operations. We do not doubt that most journalists would exercise self-censorship when lives and the interests of their own country were at stake - as has been shown in every conflict we have studied. Some, indeed, have been criticised by certain commentators for excessive self-restraint. But in our view, and in that of some journalists themselves,⁽¹⁾ they cannot always identify precisely the information which would be of use to an enemy. This was graphically illustrated for us by the account of one very experienced war correspondent⁽²⁾ who accompanied the Falklands Task Force. He described how, early on in the campaign, correspondents on board HMS Hermes had tried to file a story about the fog preventing Harriers from patrolling. When this was censored by the Royal Navy, the correspondents at first suspected the authorities of trying to cover up equipment deficiencies; they were then shown a meteorological chart indicating that the 40-mile patch of fog covering the Task Force was the only one in the Total Exclusion Zone: if the story had been filed, it was explained, the Argentines could have deduced the ships' exact position. Clearly, had there been no official censorship in this instance the consequences could have been

(1) For example, Mr Peter Stephens, The Sun.

(2) Mr Michael Nicholson, Independent Television News.

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serious. Together with other examples given to us this leads us to conclude that, even with self-censorship exercised by the media, some form of official censorship in time of conflict is desirable.

135. Moreover, the experience of the last world war was that editors actually welcomed the facilities provided by the Censorship. It was in fact the Press who rejected the idea of having to censor themselves (see paragraphs 38 and 39 of Chapter 3). We do not know the reasons for this rejection. No doubt it was caused in part by the reluctance of hard-pressed editors to take on the chore of sifting their own material; there was also perhaps a question of principle at stake: many journalists believe that it is not for them to carry out what they regard as the Government's task. Nonetheless, as several people pointed out to us,⁽¹⁾ no responsible journalist wishes to publish information which would aid the enemy and put British lives at risk. Provided, therefore, the censorship were enlightened, fair and efficient we believe that most journalists would again accept it. We are encouraged in this view by the majority of replies we received to the questions we put to the media (see Annex B).

136. The second objection to censorship was that modern communications would render impossible any attempt to carry it out effectively. The developments in telecommunications described in Chapter 4 would indeed pose daunting problems for any Western Government seeking to impose censorship on the media. The technical possibilities for evasion, and the sheer volume of communications today, are such that censorship in a democracy would only be effective if the need for it were widely accepted. The Israeli system has generally worked well because of such acceptance. Under any system of censorship which allows editors discretion in deciding whether to submit copy (such as obtained in this country during the last war and applies in Israel now) there will doubtless be occasional breaches of security; but we do not believe there will be many, and we reject the argument that because we cannot protect everything we should try to protect nothing.

137. The third objection to censorship was that it would be abused by Government, its bounds being extended beyond what was legitimate in military terms. We set

(1) For example: Mr Kenneth Ashton, General Secretary, National Union of Journalists; and Mr Robert Farmer, General Secretary, Institute of Journalists.

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out below what we consider to be the proper limits of censorship, and believe there is sufficient evidence to show that the line can be held. There will always be tensions; but it is interesting that, as paragraph 54 of Chapter 3 makes clear, in the last war the Censorship itself played a major part in resisting those people who pressed for more restrictive measures. We have enough faith in the democratic system to believe that any Western Government attempting seriously to overstep the mark would soon be brought to heel - not least by the media themselves.

138. The fourth objection related to Britain's membership of the NATO Alliance. It would clearly make sense for any censorship policy to be concerted throughout the Alliance; but failure to do so need not mean that any British-only censorship would be entirely vitiated. There is information specific to, and available only in, this country which it would be valuable to protect. We were assured by the highest NATO military authorities that even a partially successful policy of protection in the United Kingdom, with its vital reinforcement role in relation both to our own and to United States forces, would be of value to the Alliance, irrespective of what might be the practice on the Continent.

139. Similar considerations apply on the Central Front and flanks of NATO, where again much information is specific to British units and would be available only to correspondents accompanying British troops. While other people - whether local or non-accredited journalists, ordinary members of the public or Warsaw Pact agents - would no doubt gain some valuable information simply by being close to the military action, it is only with access to the authorities that most of the really vital information can normally be obtained. This view emerged clearly from the replies to our questions to journalists, the majority of whom believed that accreditation to the military was preferable to working independently. Even if, therefore, no local censorship were in force, there would still be value in censoring the material of war correspondents accompanying British troops.

140. There is, however, the complication that in a major war in Europe the forces of the Allied nations would come under the command of the Major NATO Commanders, and when this happened the national military headquarters would cease to be in direct control of activities, including public information. A

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firm direction by the North Atlantic Council to the Nato Commanders is therefore of the highest importance.

Limits of Press censorship

141. We said above that we believed most journalists would accept censorship in a future conflict, provided it were enlightened, fair and efficient. "Enlightened" in our view means that it should not seek to range too widely. Although, as explained in Chapter 2, especially in a major war the limits of censorship might need to extend beyond subjects which were strictly "military", and it would therefore be rash to lay down the exact components of any "stop list", a general guide is that censorship should seek only to prevent the untimely disclosure of information which would prejudice our own or Allied operations and assist the enemy. As one editor put it to us: "it should not be used politically as a fig-leaf to hide incompetence, poor judgement, tactical errors or indeed enemy successes"⁽¹⁾. While it is difficult to draw a dividing line between military requirements and public relations - since military objectives will often be more easily achieved with the minimum loss of life if public opinion is solid at home - censorship introduced, or believed to have been introduced, primarily for public relations reasons will never be acceptable.

142. This brings us to some particularly difficult questions: namely the maintenance of public morale, which usually only applies in a major war; and the maintenance of public support for a war, which may also - or even especially - apply to a more limited operation. Although these are not strictly matters of protecting military information, we thought it right to consider briefly some of the issues involved.

Public morale

143. The maintenance of public morale would be a vital task of Government in a major war. Throughout history Governments have, with public morale in mind, tended to exaggerate enemy losses and play down those of their own side. But such a policy has its dangers. First, it is easy to underestimate the resili-

(1) Mr Derek Jameson, News of the World

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ence of the British people to adversity⁽¹⁾. The reporting of blitz damage, for example, did not lower national morale in the last war - in fact, those who had themselves been blitzed were anxious that others should know of it.⁽²⁾ Secondly, as several editors⁽³⁾ put it to us, it would be a tragedy if a situation arose in this country similar to that in Nazi Germany, where some people listened to the enemy in order to get the "real news". Public mistrust of official announcements can lower morale as effectively as enemy propaganda. In the climate of confusion and anxiety created by war, rumour abounds, often in proportion to restrictions put on the free flow of information. We therefore believe it to be important that as much news as possible - whether good or bad - should reach the people.

144. This is not, however, to say that the Government must announce each loss or defeat as and when it occurs. Every commander in history has sought to confuse the enemy about his losses during the period when such information could be of value in the pursuit of victory or to minimise a defeat. And there may well be reasons other than purely operational ones - including considerations of public morale - for the timing of an announcement to be handled with great care. We share the view expressed in the HCDC Report⁽⁴⁾ that there can be no categorical imperatives in times of war; and that fighting effectiveness, civilian morale, international opinion and democratic rights all need to be weighed in the balance by Governments operating a public information policy. It follows that there may be occasions when a Government may seek to delay for a time the news of a defeat. There is, however, a distinction between delaying such information and suppressing or altering it for perpetuity: we think it important that any delayed information be released as soon as it is safe to do so.

(1) For a discussion of the mistakes made by the Ministry of Information in the early days of the last war, see: Marion Yass, This is Your War. Home Front Propaganda in the Second World War. Public Record Office, 1983. Pages 5-8.

(2) Ibid. Page 37.

(3) For example, Mr Malcolm Barker, Yorkshire Evening Post; and Mr Frank Giles, The Sunday Times.

(4) Paragraph 37.

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The question of television

145. Public morale, or at the very least public support for a conflict, may well be affected by the way in which that conflict is reported. Considerable attention was devoted to this issue in the HCDC Report⁽¹⁾, following criticisms of the MOD for attempting to carry out "taste and tone" censorship during the Falklands conflict. It is, of course, a question that is relevant to both verbal and visual media - during the Falklands conflict, for example, we were told of one occasion on which a lurid report about a wounded Serviceman was toned down after the journalist was asked how he thought the man's father would feel. But the vividness of television pictures puts them in a different category; it was, moreover, evident during the Falklands operation that, even without up-to-date pictures, television was for most people the main source of news from the front. We therefore concentrate on television here.

146. It has been argued - for example, by Mr Dean Rusk, as noted in paragraph 83 - that wars can hardly be fought without some Government control over television. The example normally quoted by commentators who take this view is the Vietnam conflict where, it will be recalled, there was no formal censorship of the media. We have suggested in paragraph 84, that it is wrong to attribute to television the full responsibility for the collapse of American support for the war, since many other factors contributed. Nonetheless, there is little doubt that the media, including television, played a role in the American public's eventual disillusionment.

147. It can be held that war should not be "sanitised" - that it is right for the general public to face squarely the consequences for the men it has sent to fight on its behalf. On the other hand, it is arguable that once the realities of war are brought into people's living rooms, disillusionment is inevitable. Some might say that this was a good reason for showing "gory" pictures on the television. But as one witness⁽²⁾ said to us, people would drive much more carefully if they saw what happened in road accidents; nonetheless such scenes are not generally shown. The problem is that democratic societies could be placed at a serious disadvantage vis-a-vis an opponent whose public were only

(1) See paragraphs 28-37.

(2) Rt Hon Dr John Gilbert, MP

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shown a one-sided picture of war. As Mr Dean Rusk said in his recent television interview: "What would have happened during World War II if Guadalcanal, the Anzio beachhead and the Battle of the Bulge had been on television throughout the Western world and this was not true in Germany?"⁽¹⁾

148. A further consideration is the individual Serviceman himself. Common decency dictates that we should not dwell on others' misery. Men who are seriously wounded or dying on behalf of their country have a right to privacy. Their families, too, have a right to be spared the sight of them in these conditions. We share the general belief, moreover, that in wartime next of kin should, wherever possible, learn of death or injury first through official sources. We would therefore hope that the media in general, and television in particular, would refrain from showing close-up pictures of untreated casualties in serious distress; and that they would delay showing pictures, or publishing names, of any other identifiable casualties for a reasonable period of time (perhaps 48 hours) until the next of kin can be informed.

149. As far as British broadcasters are concerned, we have few qualms. Both the BBC and the IBA have a specific obligation to ensure that nothing is included in programmes "which offends against good taste or decency or is likely to be offensive to public feeling"⁽²⁾. Although this obligation is normally read as applying to the showing of violence or pornography in peacetime, it also has a direct relevance to pictures of war. Moreover, both broadcasting organisations adhere to a code of practice which includes the recommendation: "Dead bodies should not be shown in close-up and film should not dwell on close-up pictures of the grief-stricken and suffering in the wake of natural disasters or man-made violence."⁽³⁾ In a separate BBC code there also appears, under the heading

(1) "The Twentieth Century Remembered", Interview by Kenneth Harris, BBC 2, 20 August 1983.

(2) Broadcasting Act 1981, Section 4(1)(a). Similar language occurs in the Resolution of the Board of Governors of the BBC (Annex to BBC Licence and Agreement of 2 April, 1981, Cmnd 8233).

(3) The Portrayal of Violence on Television. BBC and IBA Guidelines, February 1980. Page 14. Also included in the BBC's Updated Note of Guidance on The Portrayal of Violence in Television Programmes, 1983. Page 13.

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"Concern for Relatives" the following: "It is journalistically proper to withhold names of casualties when next of kin have not been informed. A reasonable time should be allowed for the bereaved to be notified personally by the appropriate organisation - armed services, airlines, etc."⁽¹⁾ With only slight modifications, to reflect what is already general working practice, we believe that these codes would adequately meet the concerns expressed in paragraphs 147 and 148 above.

150. Cable operators will, under present Government plans, be subject to the same obligations concerning taste and decency as those observed by the broadcasting organisations, and will be required to ensure that nothing is shown which could be offensive to public feeling. How precisely this is interpreted will be a matter for the Cable Authority to determine. The Cable Authority will also be obliged to draw up a code of practice on the portrayal of violence in cable programmes. We would hope that this, too, will reflect the concerns expressed above about television reporting in times of conflict.

151. The advent of direct broadcasting by satellite, described in paragraph 106 introduces a new factor into discussions about the maintenance of public morale. For, as noted in Chapter 4, in a few years' time it will be possible for British viewers with the necessary equipment to receive direct other European countries' transmissions. It would be unrealistic to expect identical standards to be applied by broadcasting organisations all over the world: until the advent of television straddling national boundaries this has not, in any case, been important. To take the example of identifiable casualties: concern for the feelings of next of kin has hitherto been a national question; it has not been necessary for British broadcasters to think twice about showing identifiable pictures of French casualties; nor for German broadcasters to worry about the effect of showing British wounded on their screens. Once direct broadcasting becomes internationalised, however, such questions will need to be co-ordinated. We suggest therefore that the broadcasting organisations consider discussing them with their West European counterparts, perhaps through the European Broadcasting Union.

(1) BBC News and Current Affairs Index, October 1980. Page 7.

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Enemy transmissions

152. A more difficult question is that of transmissions from hostile countries. As we noted in paragraph 106, British viewers will eventually be able to receive programmes beamed direct from Eastern Europe. In any East-West conflict the Warsaw Pact could be expected to use every means available to transmit propaganda to the people of the West in an attempt to lower morale and reduce public support for Western Governments' actions - just as the Nazi propaganda machine employed William Joyce (Lord Haw-Haw) to put across propaganda by radio in the last world war. Although the Government at that time considered taking action against these broadcasts, they were eventually allowed to continue unimpeded⁽¹⁾ (and indeed provided many people with a source of entertainment). Visual propaganda transmitted by the Warsaw Pact might not be so innocuous. Even in peacetime the Soviet Union devotes massive resources to what are termed "active measures" - measures designed to undermine Western values and promote Soviet policies. These would certainly continue in wartime. In addition, part of the huge Soviet propaganda machine would no doubt be diverted to attempts to mislead the Western authorities themselves about Warsaw Pact plans. We were told, however, that enemy broadcasts would be very difficult to jam. We have not examined in detail the technical possibilities, since this question strictly falls outside our terms of reference.

Deception of the enemy

153. As we noted in paragraph 26, the British Government practised deception against the enemy extensively in the last war. Contingency plans were laid to persuade the Luftwaffe that Richmond Park was London's dockland. "The man who never was" (in reality a corpse dressed as a British staff officer) was put overboard from a submarine in 1943 bearing letters purporting to be addressed to General Alexander in North Africa and succeeded in misleading the Germans about Allied landings in Sicily. And elaborate measures were taken to conceal Allied D-Day plans.

154. The main event which raised the issue of deceiving the enemy during the Falklands conflict was Sir Frank Cooper's unattributable briefing of the media

(1) See: Yass, This is Your War. Pages 22-25.

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about the San Carlos landings. Considerable attention was paid to the question in the HCDC Report, (1) which concluded that there could be: "sound military reasons for withholding the whole truth from the public domain, for using the media to put out "misinformation", and for believing that particular rumours will redound to one's own side's advantage". The report went on: "These tactics, however, present risks to future credibility and should be used only after serious consideration. In such cases, where appropriate, the Ministry should take editors into their confidence".(2)

155. Commenting on this in their reply, the MOD said that: "[propaganda] must be clearly separate from the Public Relations functions and that the deliberate dissemination of misinformation is bound to be counter-productive".(3) It is clear from the context that the MOD are thinking only in terms of telling direct lies to the media. We would wholly endorse their statement: such a practice is, in our opinion, a clumsy way of misleading the enemy, and the damage it is liable to do in eroding Government credibility far outweighs the benefit it is likely to bring. But we see a clear need in wartime for the kind of sophisticated deception measures adopted in the last war. Such activities ought in our view to be clearly separate from Public Relations. They should, moreover, form no part of any censorship system: although, as in the last war, we would not expect censors to check every fact for accuracy, we believe that they should never be asked to use their position to propagate deliberate lies.

Speculation

156. We turn now to the question of speculation in the media by retired officers. This issue, too, was addressed by the HCDC in its report on the Falklands, and the view was taken that: "at times, press and television speculation clearly went too far"(4). We do not consider here the Falklands example

(1) See paragraphs 26-27, 70, 97-101 and 129.

(2) Page lix, Conclusion (iii)

(3) The Handling of Press and Public Information during the Falklands Conflict, MOD Observations. Paragraph 3.

(4) Page lx, Conclusion (xvi)

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in detail, not least because it is the subject of a special study commissioned by the MOD from King's College, London. Our own impression is that speculation in the past has caused little harm. It is no doubt irritating for those in charge of an operation to find people making accurate assessments of their plans; but Governments often fail to take account of all those other "experts" whose forecasts are inaccurate, and who are just as likely to be believed by an enemy with time enough to study them. Nonetheless, there may be occasions when well-informed speculation can give the enemy useful leads.

157. The HCDC Report itself pointed out (1) that retired Service officers continue to be bound by the Official Secrets Acts. They are, in fact, like other Government servants asked to sign a declaration on leaving the Forces reminding them of their obligations under these Acts and specifically of the need to obtain MOD's sanction before communicating "either orally or in writing, including publication in a speech, lecture, radio or television broadcast or in the Press" any information acquired as a result of their service.(2) Although this wording may be interpreted as referring only to specific information and not to experience gained by an officer during the course of his whole career, it might be sensible if in any future conflict retired officers and others in receipt of official information were required to check with the MOD before accepting invitations from the media; and if the obligation were made more explicit at the time of their retirement.

The need for trust

158. One of the reasons for the extensive use of retired officers by the media during the Falklands conflict was, of course, the MOD's decision to cease off-the-record briefings in the first few weeks of the campaign. This decision was criticised in the HCDC Report (3), a conclusion which was accepted by the MOD in its response (4). In our view, a positive Government information policy

(1) Paragraph 111

(2) MOD Form 135

(3) Page 1x, Conclusion (xv)

(4) The Handling of Press and Public Information during the Falklands Conflict, MOD Observations. Paragraph 12.

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in wartime is essential. For as the introduction to the Government's "Regulations for Correspondents", referred to in paragraph 48, states: "the essence of successful warfare is secrecy; the essence of successful journalism is publicity." Unless, therefore, efforts are made by each side to understand the other, tensions are bound to arise.

159. For the Government, this means taking journalists as far as possible into their confidence. This is particularly important if any system of censorship is to apply which relies on editors' discretion. Too often, as one practised war correspondent put it to us, the media in this country are regarded as: "men in camel-hair coats who should use the tradesman's entrance."⁽¹⁾ A system of intensive, accurate, honest (and where necessary confidential) briefings of editors at home, as well as of correspondents in the field, will help to build strong relationships and create a climate in which journalists themselves will help to protect militarily damaging information. "Protection" and "handling" of information are thus two sides of the same coin.

160. In the field, we believe that a military commander should look on the handling of information as part and parcel of the war effort. If the media are present and he fights an action without taking them into consideration, he is not serving his cause as well as he might. There will, of course, be matters that he will need to keep secret. Nor should he expect correspondents only to report what is favourable to him. We share the view put to us by one experienced journalist that: "the public needs an independent account of its own wars, provided neither by those conducting them (the Armed Forces) nor by those promoting them (the Government of the day)".⁽²⁾ Nonetheless, a commander who gains the confidence of the media will automatically help to engender a responsible attitude. Correspondents themselves must bear in mind that an indiscretion published in their papers may produce military consequences out of all proportion to the apparent importance of the disclosure - as the example quoted in paragraph 134 illustrated. But as that example also showed, it is important that the authorities should wherever possible explain the reasons for their decisions to avoid misunderstandings.

(1) Mr David Sells, BBC TV.

(2) Mr David Fairhall, The Guardian.

Contingency planning

161. We have discussed above some general principles relating to public information policy in wartime. The main lesson we have drawn from every conflict we have studied is the need to be prepared. Where the protection of military information is concerned, it is vital that this be well-organised at the very beginning of a conflict, since it is then that mistakes are most often made. No future conflict could be counted on to include another "phoney war", as occurred in the last world war, in which there was time to run in the Censorship. Some contingency planning is therefore necessary.

162. In the next chapter we give some indication of the measures which we think will need to be adopted in specific circumstances. We have tried not to be too precise; for inflexible plans are often worse than none at all. In any event, more detailed work will be needed, both nationally and internationally. The following chapter should, however, provide a general guide to action.

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CHAPTER 6

FUTURE CONFLICTS

163. In considering what action might need to be taken by the British Government in future conflicts, we looked at four different contingencies:

- A period of transition to a major war in Europe;
- A major conventional war in Europe;
- Limited conflicts in distant parts of the world; and
- Low intensity operations.

164. We rapidly concluded, however, that the MOD had little to learn about the protection of information during low intensity operations. Northern Ireland has given those involved considerable - and continuing - experience of relations with the media in conditions short of war, and although there were many information problems at the outset of the troubles, most of these seem now to have been resolved. The following paragraphs therefore concentrate on the other three contingencies.

Transition to major wara. In the United Kingdom

165. One difficult problem which we had to consider involved a period of tension that might precede a major confrontation between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. Representatives of the media giving evidence to the study group tended to the view that no special measures were needed in such a period. The majority of our political and Government witnesses, however, were agreed on both the desirability and the difficulty of taking powers to safeguard military information at such a time. As one⁽¹⁾ pointed out: in Europe, the first priority

(1) Rt Hon Sir Frank Cooper

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of any Government would be to stop war breaking out; the timing of release of information in a period of mounting tension could thus in certain circumstances be absolutely crucial to the issue of war or peace.

166. It is, of course, impossible to predict how such a situation might develop; but on the analogy of past experience (for example the Cuba crisis in 1962) precautionary moves could well need to be made at very short notice, possibly in advance of public awareness of the threat. Large-scale movements both of our own and Allied forces could be taking place in the United Kingdom. Many such movements would be publicised at a suitable time as part of our deterrent strategy; but some details such as, for example, the precise timing of cross-Channel reinforcements, could be of great value to an enemy and endanger our own and Allied forces if, despite our efforts, war broke out.

167. In normal times the media, in particular local press and radio stations, would freely disclose details of local military movements. In a period of East-West tension, however, the primary aim of deterrence (by timely disclosure of our preparations in such a way as to ensure maximum diplomatic impact) and the secondary aim of military effectiveness (by denying the potential enemy information which would enable him to counter our military moves if war broke out) would be more likely to be attained if there were some form of control on the circulation of information.

168. In the past, such control has been effected by the passage of emergency legislation followed by Defence Regulations, as happened in both world wars. Today the speed of events could make such a procedure dangerously slow. In a major crisis the passage of emergency legislation, supposing the crisis to occur on one of the days on which Parliament was not actually sitting (and the chances of this are roughly one in two) might at the worst take 48 hours.

169. During a period of mounting tension the contrast between the powers of a democratic Government and those of a totalitarian state comes into sharp relief. At such a time, when the issue of peace or war could be in the balance, it can well be argued that the points made in paragraph 37 of the HCDC Report apply with no less force than in time of war: namely, that no categorical imperatives can be relied on and that a balance must be struck between, on the one hand

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maintaining democratic freedoms and, on the other the need to put the nation in a posture which would minimise the chance of war.

170. We therefore examined two possible courses of action which might reduce the disadvantages we would suffer vis-a-vis a totalitarian state in such a crisis. The first would be for the Government to seek the voluntary cooperation of the media, if there should be an imminent threat of major war, to hold up details of the military dispositions of British or Allied forces unless officially released. The second would be for the Government to take certain of the powers which we propose for major war in paragraph 180 below, but closely restricted both as to time and substance, to ensure as far as possible that such details were not published. These powers would lapse automatically after 48 hours unless prolonged by new legislation; and there would be no restrictions on media comment about, or criticism of, the fact that emergency moves were being made: only specific details and timings would be embargoed.

171. In favour of the voluntary approach it can be argued that responsible editors would respond to a justified appeal made with the authority of the Prime Minister; that the Government would be inhibited from introducing formal censorship in peacetime by the overriding need to gain the support of independent men and women of good-will; that to take additional legal powers which, however restricted their extent, would be unprecedented before the outbreak of war would create suspicion, would alienate the media and could prove counter-productive; and that it would be impossible to pass legislation affecting the freedom of the media through Parliament in peacetime.

172. In favour of the second course of action is the danger that a voluntary arrangement could not be made to work quickly enough, and that the media's response, bearing in mind both the very large numbers of news sources to be covered and the uncertain attitudes of some of the "fringe" press, could well be less comprehensive than if the request were backed by legal powers; and there is the argument that such a limited infringement of freedom, when weighed against the overwhelming importance of successful deterrent moves during a major international crisis, would be justifiable.

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173. In either case there would be breaches. Some foreign correspondents might well seek to evade any restrictions, and enemy agents and sympathisers would also be active. But, as we said in Chapter 5, we reject the argument that because we cannot do everything we should do nothing.

174. In our view, a good response would be obtained from a voluntary arrangement with the media. If, however, the Government believed that more were needed, it would be for them to judge whether the second course of action described in paragraph 170 above, requiring as it would legislation either in peacetime or at a very early stage in a major crisis, would be politically acceptable.

b. Overseas

175. We have discussed in the previous paragraphs the arrangements which might be made in the United Kingdom for protecting sensitive information in a period of transition to major war. But on the Continent the need would be just as pressing - if not more so. In such a period newsmen would probably flock to the Central Front from all over the world. Together with the thousands of journalists already present - 750 of them in 1st British Corps area alone - they would pose a major problem: their reporting might not only interfere with some of the political signals directed by the NATO Alliance to the Warsaw Pact; it might also put at risk the military operations of the Alliance if, despite all efforts, war broke out.

176. In large measure this would be the concern of the member states on whose soil Allied forces were operating. They, too, might need to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of some form of information control, such as we have discussed in paragraphs 170 to 174 above. NATO itself would also be involved, since at some stage the Major NATO Commanders would take over operational control from the different national military headquarters. A unified system for dealing with the very large number of journalists in the field would therefore be essential. Paragraphs 208 to 214 below give some indication of the measures which we believe would need to be taken by units on the ground once war had broken out. During a period of mounting tension the main measure we would recommend would be that as many as possible of the correspondents present should be accredited. At sea, similar arrangements would need to apply.

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c. Service censorship

177. Private Service communications should, we believe, begin to be censored during a period of tension and before war itself broke out. Such censorship would in our view be an essential part of ensuring that sensitive information of which Servicemen were aware - and which would necessarily be much greater than that available to the average civilian - did not leak. It should, we think, apply not only to Servicemen in NATO Commands, but also to those in sensitive national posts; and it should extend to civilians serving in military headquarters and other vital areas.

Major conventional wara. Home censorship in major conventional war

178. Once a major war had broken out most of the political difficulties of applying censorship would vanish. As we indicated in Chapter 5, we believe that the majority of British journalists would welcome a system that would enable them to check whether material which they were proposing to publish might aid the enemy or put British lives at risk. We are also convinced that the British public would support any measures introduced to this end.

179. No forecasts can, of course, be made as to how long a period of conventional conflict might last; but, as noted in Chapter 3, current NATO planning places a good deal more emphasis on conventional defence. We explained in Chapter 1 of this report that a nuclear war would pose entirely different problems and does not therefore fall within the scope of our study. We have looked carefully at the system which obtained in the last war and believe it contains much that would still be valid in a future conventional war of national survival.

180. We would advocate a regulation, along the lines of Defence Regulation 3(1)(see Annex G), which would make it an offence for any person to obtain or pass on information of use to the enemy. We have doubts, however, about the form of that regulation, which begins by stating a prohibition in such vague terms that it would technically be a prima facie offence, for example, to possess a copy of Jane's Fighting Ships; but provides on the other hand that

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no person shall be found guilty of an offence if he proves that his action is not likely to prejudice the defence of the realm or the efficient prosecution of the war. Our reservations are on two counts: in the first place, the wording is so nebulous as to make the regulation almost unusable - this may, indeed, have been part of the reason for the small number of prosecutions brought in the last war. Secondly, we dislike an approach which places so much of the burden of proof on the accused. We therefore consider that some revision of this paragraph would be necessary.

181. We would further recommend the retention of the clause providing exemption from prosecution for acts "done under any authority or permission granted by or on behalf of [His] Majesty" - which we take to have been the legal backing for the censor's "Passed for Publication" stamp affording immunity (see paragraph 35). This would, we think, be an important element of any wartime censorship system. Given that a certain confusion has arisen in the peacetime context about the relationship between the D Notice system and the Official Secrets Act,⁽¹⁾ we recommend that any wartime legislation should provide an absolute and clear guarantee.

(i) Press censorship

182. We have considered whether submission to Censorship should be mandatory; or voluntary - as it was for British editors in the last war (see paragraphs 37 to 39). Several of those submitting evidence to us - including some from the media - were in favour of a mandatory system. The differing calibre, experience and attitudes of editors, and the hard fact of competition between newspapers, was most often cited as the reason why a system based on voluntary submission would not work.

183. We are, however, unconvinced. From our reading of history the Second World War system - although perhaps not ideal - would appear to have worked reasonably well. We recognise, as we said in Chapter 4, that much has changed since then: attitudes and expectations are very different now; and we are in

(1) See the House of Commons Third Report from the Defence Committee: The D Notice System. Paragraphs 21 and 40.

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an era of abundance of media outlets and methods of news transmission which render media competition fiercer than it has ever been. Nonetheless, as we argued in paragraph 101 we do not believe that basic attitudes towards the national interest have changed; and in a major war we are convinced that most people would not knowingly damage the war effort. It will be recalled that three different schemes for compulsory censorship put forward to the War Cabinet in 1940 were found to be either impracticable or undesirable. In our view, much the same considerations would apply to-day. We therefore conclude that voluntary submission should once more form the basis of any censorship at home in a major war.

184. Extensive guidance to editors, along the lines of the Defence Notices issued in the last war, would again be essential, and we recommend that thought be given now to the type of information which might need to be protected. We recognise the difficulties involved in such an exercise - as we made clear in Chapter 2, precisely what facts will be of use to an enemy will vary not only according to the conflict itself but also to the stage it has reached. We believe, nonetheless, that the attempt should be made.

185. The guidance should in due course be discussed with the media. This, we think, might best be done through the D Notice Committee (officially known as the Defence Press and Broadcasting Committee (DPBC)). Although the D Notice system no longer commands the respect of some sections of the media ⁽¹⁾ the committee itself is a potentially useful consultative body, containing as it does representatives of all sections of the British media: national and provincial press and the broadcasters, as well as Government officials (see Annex N).

186. Some forum providing for consultation between the Government and the media in wartime itself is, we believe, needed. In the First World War - but not in the Second - the D Notice Committee in fact continued to operate; but it was allowed only to discuss very mundane matters and expressed the view at the end of the war that it might have played a more useful role. We think there would be such a role for it in any future major war. We would not go so far as to suggest that the DPBC provide an appeal committee to deal with specific com-

(1) Ibid. Paragraphs 17-23.

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plaints, such as exists in Israel (see paragraph 87); its function is in principle consultative, and in any event it would probably be too unwieldy for this purpose. But there would undoubtedly be many questions of policy and planning, as well perhaps as more immediate issues, which would be appropriate for the DPBC to discuss.

187. Some editors who submitted evidence to us recommended a special Government/media appeal committee rather along Israeli lines; this, it was suggested, should have the power to make immediate and binding decisions on disputed questions. We have considered this idea but have doubts about whether any committee, however constituted, would provide the necessary flexibility for dealing with day-to-day questions. It will be recalled, too, that the Israeli committee handles very few complaints: 180 since 1949, or about five a year. It might in our view be preferable to allow the Censorship itself to handle disputes: as we noted in paragraph 54 the censors of the last war frequently found themselves arguing the media's case to the "security" people. Moreover, since under the system we propose editors would not be obliged to follow the censor's ruling, we believe that a formal appeal committee would probably prove to be unnecessary.

188. The corollary to this is that those operating the Censorship should be of high calibre, and should have a good knowledge both of the media and of the subject of protecting military information. The ability to think, and to communicate views, fast and well would be even more important in a future war than it was in the last. We would therefore recommend that a nucleus of people - perhaps 30 or so - be trained as censors in peacetime and be given practical experience of dealing with information matters, so that they could be drafted in rapidly if the need arose. Much of the trouble between the authorities and the media during the Falklands campaign arose from a lack of professionalism and from inconsistencies between censors: guidelines were interpreted variously by different individuals. Some of this might be avoided if a more methodical approach were adopted in future. If the last war is any guide many more than 30 censors would eventually be needed; and given the vast growth in media outlets since the war we would hesitate to suggest a figure. But the 30 would provide a useful cadre of people, whose expertise could be drawn on by their colleagues if there were no time to train others.

189. We believe that a Chief Press Censor would again need to be appointed and should be a person of high calibre, with direct access to Ministers, enjoying the full confidence of the media and able to arbitrate on difficult cases. The D Notice Secretary, whose functions would be largely superseded by the Censorship after the outbreak of war, would have considerable, and invaluable, background knowledge; he might therefore himself become the Chief Press Censor, or at least act as one of his assistants (the Chief Press Censor of the last war, Admiral Thomson, in a reverse move, became the D Notice Secretary when the war ended). The Chief Press Censor's staff would be assisted not only by his own background knowledge of events but also by detailed guidance from the MOD. Both the Chief Press Censor himself and his staff should, we believe, be distinct from the Chief of Public Relations and the MOD Public Relations Organisation. The latter would handle the "positive" side of public information policy - that of facilitating access; while the former would deal with the "negative" side - that of protecting military information.

190. An important part of the "discretionary censorship" system which we are proposing would be a scrutiny section to ensure that the media were in fact observing the obligations laid down by the Defence Regulations. The scrutineers should, we believe, scan not only the British press and broadcasting but also the foreign media, for reasons which we explain in paragraph 197 below. This would mean finding people with a good knowledge of a variety of foreign languages.

191. Special arrangements might be needed to deal with live 'phone-in radio programmes, discussed in paragraph 107. We consider, however, that this is a matter which should be left to the broadcasters themselves, and that it might form part of any revision of codes of practice which we have suggested they undertake in a separate context (see paragraph 149).

192. The live radio reporting of Parliament perhaps needs to be mentioned, given that it is a new development since the last war. At that time, it will be recalled (see paragraph 43), special arrangements were made to ensure that useful information was not released to the enemy through Parliamentary debates. New measures might be needed in a future major war - perhaps no more than a warning light in the Chamber reminding members that they were being broadcast

live - to ensure that damaging information did not reach the enemy through this quarter.

193. We discussed in some detail in Chapter 5 the issue of public morale. During the last war there was a regulation (No 2D) giving the Home Secretary the power to suspend publications which systematically fomented opposition to the successful prosecution of the war. Such a provision would, we believe, again be necessary, and would go some way to meeting the concerns described in paragraph 100 about subversive elements in society.

194. Broadcasting was not included in Regulation 2D. Television, in any case, ceased on the outbreak of war, and the Government already had the power to require the BBC to refrain from putting out certain specified material. The power still exists (1) and is paralleled for the IBA (2), although in practice neither power has ever been used. The Cable and Broadcasting Bill, which is shortly to be presented to Parliament, will not, we understand, include a reserve Ministerial power to require the exclusion of material from cable programmes. We would therefore recommend that special provision be made to ensure that cable programmes were covered in wartime in the same way as publications.

195. We think it unlikely that the systematic publication of information that could be directly useful to the enemy would be construed as "matter calculated to foment opposition to the successful prosecution of the war", although that is a matter for legal interpretation. We consider, however, that the power summarily to suspend a publication should apply as much to one which systematically published information that was directly damaging to the war effort as to one which systematically fomented opposition at home. Such a power might, we suggest, be taken in connection with the proposed regulation which we have discussed in paragraphs 180 and 181.

(1) See the BBC Licence and Agreement, Section 13(4)

(2) Broadcasting Act 1981, Section 29(3)

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196. For foreign correspondents working in this country during a major war, the system we propose would be as follows. First, those wishing to report on the war would register with the British Government and be given copies of the guidance issued to British editors, described in paragraph 184; they would be expected to abide by this in their own reports home, submitting any material about which they had doubts. For video, the Government would need to come to an arrangement with the satellite consortia that only authorised pictures would be transmitted; this could be done through British Telecom. Any correspondent who breached the ground-rules would face possible withdrawal of credentials and expulsion.

197. The scrutiny section described in paragraph 190 should, as we have said, scan the foreign as well as the British media for damaging information deliberately sent from this country. Even so, it would probably not always be possible to trace mavericks. We would therefore envisage that there should be some monitoring of foreign correspondents' international telephone and telex calls - probably only on a sample basis - as at present occurs in Israel. Foreign correspondents are, of course, only part of the wider problem of information leaving this country in a major war. This is considered further in the next section.

198. We are convinced that the majority of foreign correspondents in this country would co-operate. We were impressed by the evidence given to us by two foreign correspondents based in the United Kingdom⁽¹⁾ who said that they would normally expect to abide by the ground-rules of the country in which they were operating. Nonetheless co-operation would, we are certain, only be readily given if the rules were enlightened and fair; and if the system were efficiently operated.

199. An indispensable part of any Press censorship system would need to be an acceptance by the authorities that if information were published outside this country, its subsequent publication by the British media would be allowed. This principle applied in the last war, is a feature of the current D Notice

(1) Dr Karl Heinz Wocker, Norddeutscher Rundfunk, Westdeutscher Rundfunk and Die Zeit; and Mr Peter Osnos, Washington Post.

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system and also operates in Israel. The policy is, of course, open to misuse: it has not been unknown for journalists deliberately to give information to their foreign colleagues for publication abroad so that they might themselves subsequently publish it in this country. We consider, however, that if the censorship is working well, such instances are likely to be rare.

(ii) Postal and telecommunications censorship

200. The foregoing paragraphs have dealt with the question of censorship of the media in a major war. We now consider whether there would be a need to censor private communications leaving the country, as was done in the last war (see paragraphs 44 to 46). This was, it will be recalled, as much for purposes of counter-espionage and intelligence-gathering as to prevent ordinary people from inadvertently passing on damaging information.

201. At that time, all international telephone and telex calls were monitored by the P & T Censorship, and all material destined for publication abroad was censored by stationing Press censors in the main cable offices through which press telegrams passed. In an age of automatic telephones and telex, when one million international telephone calls are made each day to and from the United Kingdom, censorship along Second World War lines would no longer be feasible. And yet we believe it important that there be some means of controlling the information leaving this country during a major war. Given the scale of current traffic, the only way of managing the problem would be to reduce substantially the number of international calls made.

202. It goes without saying that direct private telecommunications links with the enemy should be severed. Services with Warsaw Pact countries constitute, however, only one per cent of calls to and from this country in peacetime. Services with our NATO Allies form about 70 per cent of calls and those with other countries about 30 per cent. We believe that it would make sense to provide a system under which, initially at least, all international telephone and telex calls to and from this country could be regulated in a major war. Calls to other NATO countries could be excluded from this system of regulation as and when they introduced censorship systems parallel to our own.

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203. Both inward and outward telephone and telex calls could then be restricted to a list of specified users. We are not competent to judge precisely who these users might be; but certain Government Departments and representatives would need to be included, as would a number of commercial firms. We would also recommend that the media, including registered foreign correspondents working in this country (of whom there are at present some 700), should be treated as "preference" users. Their calls would be selectively monitored, as would those from any other sources made available to non-Government users.

204. Such a scheme would, we understand, not be technically possible at present but would be feasible in a few years' time, when new technology is introduced throughout the British telecommunications network. The necessary operational arrangements would, however, need to be planned at an early stage; and there would be cost implications which the Government would wish to take into account. This question is discussed further in Annex O.

205. There remain the other means of conveying information controlled by the P & T Censorship in the last war, namely: mail, freight, hand of traveller, international telegrams (which have now become "cables") and radio. As regards the first three, we think that time would be an important consideration. Information which is 48 hours old is of much less value than information transmitted instantaneously. Since all forms of international transport would be likely to suffer delays in a major war, especially at the outset, we believe that the problem of general censorship of mail, freight and travellers could best be left to be tackled in the light of conditions prevailing at the time.

206. "Cables" are not subject to the same delays as those methods that are entirely dependent on physical transportation; there would therefore be merit in taking steps to ensure that outward cables did not contain militarily damaging information. This could be done by stationing censors at the individual cable offices and would not, we understand, be a major operation.

207. Amateur and private radios pose a difficult problem, as we explained in Chapter 4. In conditions of major war we would recommend that most licences for long-distance radio transmitters be revoked (some transmissions would need

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to continue - for example, between the mainland and off-shore oil rigs). The majority of law-abiding citizens would, we believe, observe the ban. Those who did not would be assumed to have hostile intent. Policing of such a measure would, of course, be a major problem; but this question goes beyond our remit and will need to be given further thought by the experts.

b. Field Press censorship in major conventional war

208. The aim of the accreditation proposed in paragraph 176 would, from the military point of view, be to ensure some control over war correspondents. The control would form part of a "bargain:" correspondents might be offered certain facilities (for example, access to sensitive areas, confidential background briefings, transport, telecommunications, rations and protective clothing) in return for their agreement to submit material for vetting. The penalty for breaching the agreement would be disaccreditation. Such a bargain has, in fact, been struck in all major conflicts involving British troops since the last world war - although it must be said that the facilities provided have not always been of a very high standard. That correspondents should feel they were receiving something valuable in return for their co-operation would be important if the field censorship bargain were to work. Access to sensitive areas and confidential background briefings could be provided at little expense. To provide transport and telecommunications would require additional resources to be made available; they might even be unnecessary if the ordinary commercial European communications systems continued unhampered - although in reality there would probably be considerable disruption. Precisely what facilities could be offered would, of course, be a matter for the NATO Commanders. We recommend that this be given further study.

209. The question arises whether correspondents from countries not involved in the conflict should be accredited. In principle we believe that this would be desirable: there could well be neutral countries whose sympathy with the Allied cause it would be important to foster. In practice, however, we recognise that there could be a problem of sheer numbers. Again, this requires further study against the background of the facilities available.

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210. As we indicated in paragraph 139, we believe that most of the British media would wish their correspondents to be accredited. But, especially if facilities were not available to all, some might well attempt to work independently of the military. This might also be true of non-NATO journalists if they were, in the event, denied accreditation. And, as noted earlier, especially on the Central Front there would be large numbers of local journalists who would neither seek nor be granted accreditation to the military and would therefore be outside any field censorship system. If such people were not controlled under a home censorship system in the countries on whose soil battle was being waged they could pose problems for Allied troops. We argued in paragraph 139 that the really vital information would probably be obtained only with access to the authorities. Nonetheless, as we also recognised there, some valuable information would be available to people without this access. They would thus be a secondary problem, but a problem nonetheless.

211. If commercial telephone and telex lines were still operating, unauthorised persons could transmit valuable information gathered in or around the battlefield with relative ease (every house within five kilometres of the Inner German border is, in fact, required by law to have a telephone). Even if these services had broken down a potentially greater problem would remain in that amateur and private radios, as explained in Chapter 4, could be used with little risk of detection by the authorities. Unauthorised cameramen should be easier to see. Moreover, moving pictures transmitted by satellite offer at least the theoretical possibility of control (see paragraphs 121 to 125).

212. If control of such transmissions were not allowed by the host country or countries - and in any event (because of the difficulty of controlling amateur radio), for information which could be transmitted verbally - the military authorities would have to rely on preventing the collection of information in the first place. To do this it would be necessary to exercise rigid control of access to sensitive areas. This would limit the damage which might be done by unauthorised persons - whether they were non-accredited journalists, ordinary members of the public or actual spies. But as we argued in Chapter 2 control of access can never be the complete solution; a package of measures, including a home censorship system in the country concerned, would be preferable.

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213. Returning to the censorship of accredited correspondents, we would strongly recommend that, as with the home censorship system which we have proposed for the United Kingdom (see paragraph 189) the "positive" side of information policy be distinct from the "negative". In other words, escort officers should be responsible for facilitating access but not for censorship, which would be carried out by a separate body of people. Both escort officers and censors should be carefully selected and trained and should be "played" in future NATO exercises.

214. As to the type of information which should be censored, there is considerable past practice as a guide. Since any "stop list" would need to be discussed in detail within NATO, we do not here suggest detailed rules. One subject only perhaps needs comment in view of what we have said in Chapter 5 about public morale: namely the reporting, and particularly the televising, of casualties. No nation would, in our view, be content to learn the details of its casualties through another nation's media. The advent in the near future of television straddling national boundaries will bring this problem into prominence. We have recommended in paragraph 151 that the European broadcasting organisations discuss the question of co-ordinating codes of wartime reporting. But some field censorship of casualty reporting along the lines indicated in paragraph 148 above would, we think, also be necessary and should be discussed in NATO.

Limited conflicts

a. At home

215. It will be recalled from Chapter 3 that censorship has not normally been imposed at home in past limited conflicts involving British forces. As we pointed out in paragraph 62 the vetting carried out in London during the Falklands conflict was in fact no more than an extension of the field censorship. No special arrangements were made for censoring material emanating from places other than the field of battle, although the D Notice Secretary made occasional representations to editors after they had published material which was seriously contrary to D Notice guidance.

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216. We do not believe it would be right to attempt to introduce a formal censorship system at home in any future limited conflict. There would, however, be merit in providing an improved advisory service for editors and journalists who might be unsure whether the publication of certain information would be detrimental to military operations.

217. In peacetime conditions the media are served in such matters by the D Notice Secretary - although he has come to be used by them less and less since the last world war. During the Falklands conflict, as noted in paragraph 62 he remained available to answer queries, and in fact received an appreciably increased number during the first weeks of the campaign.⁽¹⁾ Despite the HCDC's conclusion that: "there is probably only limited scope for D Notices in wartime conditions"⁽²⁾, his evidence leads us to believe that there would be room for building on the system during a limited conflict.

218. The scheme we would envisage would be entirely voluntary and would be unlikely to involve physical vetting of material, although we would hope that journalists would submit material if they were in any doubt. Some contingency planning would be required. Thought should, we believe, be given now to the type of information that might need to be protected at home in a limited conflict: the current D Notices are very broad and often give the impression that editors should say nothing about anything included in them. A more specific set, or sets, of guidelines might be more appropriate to limited war conditions. The work which we have recommended be carried out for determining the information to be protected at home in a major war (see paragraph 184) would be relevant to this exercise; but we would expect that the type of information requiring protection in a limited conflict would be more restricted. The DPBC may also wish to take account of the fact that for the scheme to work efficiently the D Notice Secretariat might need to be expanded beyond its present two members during the course of the conflict.

(1) See letter from the Secretary to the D Notice Committee, HCDC Report, Minutes of Evidence, Volume II. Page 118.

(2) Page lix, Conclusion (vii).

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219. It could be difficult to persuade foreign correspondents based in the United Kingdom to participate in the scheme we have outlined above. They play no part in the D Notice system in peacetime and, as one our of witnesses (1) told us, in a purely British operation - or at least in one which did not involve troops from the correspondent's own country - his prime loyalty would be to his own nationals.

220. We see no remedy in compulsion, which we do not think would be acceptable - or would work - in conditions of limited conflict. We do believe, however, that the "positive" side of Government information policy might offer some assistance. There was a clear feeling among foreign correspondents submitting evidence to us that they were treated by the British authorities as second class citizens. An example was the following extract from a letter by the Foreign Press Association: "A greater awareness of the outside world and, indeed, of the various and different interests of the foreign media representatives on the part of Government press officers would certainly reduce the impression of some of our members that British indifference to, or dislike of, foreigners also colours the attitude towards foreign journalists".(2) The Ministry of Defence was singled out for particular criticism in the Foreign Press Association's letter. If this sense of grievance could be dispelled, we believe there would be a greater likelihood - we put it no higher than that - of securing the foreign media's co-operation in a future limited conflict. We are pleased to note the recent setting up of an Overseas Media Defence Group under COI auspices and hope that the MOD will give it every co-operation. We believe that this should include, wherever possible, accreditation for foreign journalists as war correspondents in a future limited conflict, and their participation in peacetime exercises.

b. Field Press censorship in limited conflicts

221. The system which we recommended in paragraph 208 for a major war should, we believe, also be applicable to a limited conflict: namely, an accreditation

(1) Dr Karl Heinz Wocker, Norddeutscher Rundfunk, Westdeutscher Rundfunk and Die Zeit.

(2) Mr Roland Hill, Vice President, Foreign Press Association.

"bargain" with war correspondents, under which they would submit material for vetting in return for receiving certain facilities. Perhaps even more than in a major war, the facilities provided would need to be attractive for the bargain to work. In the majority of conflicts of recent years - with the sole exception of the Falklands - correspondents have been able to move freely in and out of the conflict area and to use the commercial telecommunications systems to transmit material. This first became noticeable at Suez, when unaccredited "day-trippers" from Cyprus caused considerable resentment and dismay among those who were accredited to the British forces, both because the latter's own material often reached the United Kingdom after the visitors' and because their living conditions were not as comfortable. We are therefore pleased to note that the MOD are already studying this question in detail.

222. Control of access would, however, be the key. As one witness⁽¹⁾ pointed out to us: in places where journalists could move around freely they would be likely to find out for themselves what was going on more quickly than if they were being officially briefed. In a city like Beirut, for example, there would be little point in trying to operate an accreditation system. In the middle of a desert or a jungle, however, where communications generally were much more difficult, an accreditation system would make more sense. There would no doubt still be problems with non-accredited people similar to those discussed in paragraphs 210 to 212. But the military would have to control as far as possible the access of such people to sensitive information. We recommend that ways in which access could be controlled should, in fact, form part of any MOD contingency planning for limited conflicts.

223. We said above that we believed accreditation should, wherever possible, be available to foreign correspondents. Numbers will always be a problem. Compromises may have to be reached and choices made that could leave some discontented. But in deciding whether, and if so on what scale, to accredit foreign correspondents, the British Government should take account of the likely impact of their decision on international opinion.

(1) Mr H Alex Frere, Reuters and ex-UPI.

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224. As with a major war, we would recommend that escort officers' functions be separated from those of the censors. Careful selection and training of personnel, and periodic participation in exercises, would again be essential.

225. "Stop lists" would no doubt vary from conflict to conflict, and we do not therefore discuss them here. We believe that they should form part of MOD contingency plans and are pleased to note that the MOD is already studying this question in conjunction with the media.

c. Service censorship in limited conflicts

226. Whether Service correspondence should be censored in a limited conflict would be a matter primarily for operational judgement - past practice, as shown in Chapter 3, has been inconsistent. We gave, however, an illustration in that chapter (paragraph 69) of the potential damage which could arise from information inadvertently included in a Serviceman's letter home. Since future conflicts are unlikely to have the automatic three-week delay in mail delivery which was normal in the Falklands conflict, we would recommend that Service censorship should normally take place.

Double vetting

227. One further aspect of our proposed system for both major and limited conflicts should be highlighted. We would not envisage a second level of vetting in London of war correspondents' reports, as was the practice during the Falklands conflict. We have pointed out elsewhere that the Falklands practice was atypical and was possible only because all written copy had of necessity to be passed through the MOD, while voluntary arrangements were made with the broadcasters for the MOD censors to listen, or look, in simultaneously when unedited material was received. In the absence of a similar agreement with editors this is unlikely to be possible in future conflicts, since direct communications from the correspondent to his home office are much more likely to be the order of the day. We do not, moreover, believe that such double-vetting is essential. Field censors could, and should, be briefed to deal with all information coming from the field of battle. The only times we would expect material to be referred to London would be those - we would hope, rela-

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tively rare - occasions on which there was doubt, and when agreement could not be reached between the field censor and the journalist concerned. In this way, the field censorship system and the arrangements at home - whether they were the Press Censorship in major war or the advisory scheme for editors in limited conflicts - could be kept discrete.

228. One complication relates to those correspondents accompanying the Armed Forces on field operations but returning to the United Kingdom to prepare their material; this could occur if, for example, correspondents were present on bombing raids conducted by the Royal Air Force from bases in this country. Such correspondents should, we believe, be part of an accreditation "bargain" similar to that applying to correspondents working full-time in the field: in other words, they would be allowed to accompany the Armed Forces only if they agreed to submit their material for vetting. In a major war this vetting could be carried out by the Home Press Censorship. In a limited conflict it would probably be necessary to set up a small "Field" Censorship unit in this country to handle such material.

Developments in technology

229. The above recommendations are based on today's state of the art. But, as Chapter 4 showed, technological developments have been rapid in the last few years and will doubtless continue. We would therefore strongly recommend re-appraisal before the end of the decade.

Government information

230. At the heart of the matter which we have considered in this report is the wider question of the Government's handling of information. The volume of criticism by the media about Whitehall's management of them during the Falklands conflict should not in our view be lightly disregarded.

231. The British Government seeks normally to influence opinion by Parliamentary statements and Ministerial speeches, which generate their own publicity, and by largely reactive Whitehall media work. In normal times this routine effort may be sufficient, but when abnormal pressures and emergencies arise, as during

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the Falklands conflict, the system is frequently ill-equipped to deal with them. Occasional efforts have been made since the last war to improve matters and to fill the gap between the low-key routine information effort and what is required in times of stress. They have, however, usually been half-hearted or else short-lived. In the defence field some progress has been made, both in releasing information and in training personnel. Still, we feel, more could be done; now is the time to start improving the quality, status and training of information staff and making better arrangements in Whitehall for handling information. We entirely agree with the HCDC's conclusion that in future conflicts: "British Governments should not rely on the sense of fairness and objectivity of the world's media but should appreciate the importance of propaganda."⁽¹⁾ So, too, would we support their many other recommendations relating to the "positive" side of information.

232. This report has concentrated on the "negative" or protective side of information policy because we were so enjoined by our terms of reference. But as we argued in paragraph 159, and as will be evident throughout, the "protection" and "handling" of information are two sides of the same coin. We therefore hope that considerably more attention will be paid to the whole subject by British Governments in future.

233. Our final word concerns semantics. In Chapter 2 of this report we said that censorship had a bad name in Western societies. Other terms have been suggested to us, including "news management", "information access" and even "marketing." We reject them all. Where our proposals constitute what is commonly thought of as censorship - even if, as in the home censorship system suggested for major war, a considerable degree of discretion is allowed to editors - we have called them by that name. We see no need to be coy about censorship in times of conflict. As one of our witnesses rightly said: it is war, not Ascot, that is being reported. We believe that the British public, far from objecting, would be reassured to know that such measures were being taken. Whether this would be true of the public in other NATO countries we are not able to judge. But we are convinced that, provided the purpose

(1) Page lix, Conclusion (i)

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of the censorship is carefully explained and its limits just as carefully defined, a system designed to protect military information would be widely acceptable.

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CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

234. Our conclusions and recommendations may be summarised as follows:

General Principles

- (i) Although most journalists would exercise self-censorship when lives and the interests of their own country were at stake, they cannot always identify precisely the information which would be of use to an enemy. Some form of official censorship in time of conflict is therefore desirable. Provided this were enlightened, fair and efficient, most journalists would accept it (paras 134 and 135).
- (ii) Censorship should be limited to preventing the untimely disclosure of information which would prejudice our own or Allied operations and assist the enemy. (paras 137 and 141).
- (iii) It is important for public morale that as much news as possible reach the people. There may be good reasons for a Government to seek to delay news of a defeat. But information should always be released as soon as it is safe to do so (paras 143 and 144).
- (iv) Deliberate dissemination of false information through the media is to be eschewed; and deception should form no part of any censorship system. But sophisticated measures to deceive the enemy have a proper role to play in wartime (para 155).
- (v) Well-informed speculation in the media may occasionally give the enemy useful leads. Retired officers and others in receipt of official information should therefore be required to check with MOD before accepting invitations from the media in times of conflict (paras 156 and 157).
- (vi) A system of intensive (and where necessary confidential) briefings both of editors and of correspondents will help to build a relation-

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ship of trust and encourage journalists to protect militarily damaging information. The authorities should explain the reasons for their censorship decisions (paras 159 and 160).

- (vii) Military information needs to be protected at the very beginning of a conflict. Contingency planning is therefore necessary (para 161).

Broadcasting

- (viii) The media in general, and television in particular, should refrain from showing close-up pictures of untreated casualties in serious distress, and should delay showing pictures, or giving names, of any other identifiable casualties for a reasonable period of time. Small revisions to British broadcasters' codes on violence would meet concerns on this front (paras 148 and 149).
- (ix) A code of practice on violence which reflects concerns about casualty reporting in times of conflict should also be applied by cable operators (para 150).
- (x) Broadcasting organisations should consider co-ordinating codes of wartime reporting with their West European counterparts (para 151).

Transition to War

- (xi) In a period of mounting East-West tension, some restriction of the circulation of military information might be necessary both to prevent war and, if it broke out, to ensure military effectiveness. A good response would probably be obtained from a voluntary arrangement with the media. But if the Government believed more were needed it would be for them to judge whether legislation would be politically acceptable (paras 167 to 174).
- (xii) Units on the ground should accredit as many as possible of the war correspondents present (para 176).

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- (xiii) Service censorship should begin in a period of mounting East-West tension. Censorship should also apply to civilians in military headquarters and other vital areas (para 177).

Major Conventional War

- (xiv) A censorship system in the United Kingdom would be valuable in a major conventional war, irrespective of what might be the practice on the Continent (para 138).
- (xv) Such a system should be underpinned by Defence Regulations broadly similar to those issued in the last war (paras 180 and 181, and 193 to 195).
- (xvi) Submission to the Press Censorship should be voluntary (para 183).
- (xvii) Guidance should be issued to British editors; and should be discussed in advance with the media. This could be done through the D Notice Committee. The latter should provide the main forum for consultation between Government and media but should not handle specific complaints, which should be left to the Censorship (paras 184 to 187).
- (xviii) Censors should be of high calibre, and have a good knowledge of the media and of their subject. A nucleus of 30 should be trained for future contingencies. A Chief Press Censor should be appointed, with direct access to Ministers. He and his staff should be distinct from the MOD Chief of Public Relations and his organisation (paras 188 and 189).
- (xix) A scrutiny section should be set up to scan both the British and the foreign media for breaches of the regulations (para 190).
- (xx) Broadcasters should consider revising their codes of practice for wartime reporting to cover live 'phone-in programmes (paras 107 and 191).

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- (xxi) Special arrangements may be needed for the live radio reporting of Parliament (para 192).
- (xxii) Foreign correspondents working in this country should register with the Government, be issued with guidance and encouraged to submit material for vetting; only authorised video pictures should be transmitted. Their international telephone and telex calls should be monitored selectively (paras 196 and 197).
- (xxiii) Once information is published outside this country, its publication by the British media must be allowed (para 199).
- (xxiv) A system should be provided under which international telephone and telex calls to and from this country could be regulated in a major war. Authorised users should include the media (paras 202 to 204).
- (xxv) Censorship of private mail, freight and travellers leaving the country should be considered in the light of conditions prevailing at the time. "Cables" could be censored by stationing censors in the cable offices (paras 205 and 206).
- (xxvi) Most licences for long-distance radio transmitters should be revoked. The policing of such a measure should be given further thought by the experts (para 207).
- (xxvii) In a major war in Europe, the forces of Allied nations would be brought under the command of the Major NATO Commanders; a firm direction to them on military information policy from the North Atlantic Council is therefore important (paras 140 and 176).
- (xxviii) An accreditation "bargain" should be struck with war correspondents. Further study should be given to the type of facilities which could be offered, and to the number and types of correspondents who should be offered them (paras 208 and 209).

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- (xxix) Because of the difficulties of stopping all transmission of information by non-authorized persons, the military would need to exercise rigid control of access to sensitive areas and information (paras 210 to 212).
- (xxx) Escort officers should be distinct from censors. Both should be carefully selected and trained. This also applies to a limited conflict (paras 213 and 224).
- (xxxi) The type of information to be protected needs to be discussed in NATO. Some field censorship of casualty reporting would be necessary (para 214).

Limited Conflicts

- (xxxii) There should be no formal censorship system at home in limited conflicts. But there would be merit in providing an improved advisory service for journalists, based on the D Notice system. Thought should be given now to the type of information that would need to be protected (paras 216 to 218).
- (xxxiii) The foreign media should not be obliged to participate in the system but should be encouraged to do so. MOD should improve its relations with them (para 220).
- (xxxiv) In the field, an accreditation "bargain" with war correspondents should again apply. But it would only work as long as control of access in and around the conflict area were possible. This should be studied by MOD (paras 221 and 222).
- (xxxv) The Government should consider the impact of their decision on international opinion when deciding whether to accredit foreign war correspondents (para 223).
- (xxxvi) "Stop lists" should form part of MOD contingency plans (para 225).
- (xxxvii) Service correspondence should normally be censored (para 226).

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Additional Points

- (xxxviii) There should not normally be a second level of vetting in London. A small unit of "field" censors might, however, be necessary in this country to handle correspondents accompanying the Armed Forces on sorties but returning to the United Kingdom to prepare their material (paras 227 and 228).
- (xxxix) In view of developments in technology, we recommend reappraisal before the end of the decade (para 229).
- (xl) The "handling" and "protection" of information are two sides of the same coin. British Governments should pay more attention to the former as well as to the latter (paras 159 and 232).

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QUESTIONS PUT TO THE MEDIA

1. In wartime, is a mandatory system of censorship of military information necessary, with rules clearly worked out beforehand; or should discretion be left to editors?
2. How far should such censorship (voluntary or otherwise) extend: should it be confined to denying to the enemy knowledge of our military plans, capabilities and losses; or should it extend to concealing from our own Forces and from the public information which might lower their morale? If the latter, to what extent should there be limitations on the use of information put out by other nations?
3. Where should censorship of war correspondents' reports be carried out: at the scene of action; or in London; or both? What should be the procedure applied to visual and audio material?
4. Not all information will come from the scene of battle: should there be censorship of other information which might be of use to the enemy (whether under the D Notice system, or some other)?
5. Should there be censorship in a period of tension short of war (eg relating to military movements and mobilisation)?
6. If there is a choice, is it better for correspondents to operate as accredited correspondents or to work independently?

ORGANISATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS SUBMITTING WRITTEN MEMORANDA

National

British Broadcasting Corporation
 Daily Express
 Daily Mirror
 Daily Telegraph
 Financial Times
 News of the World
 The Daily Mail
 The Guardian
 The Observer
 The Standard
 The Sun
 The Sunday Times
 Sunday Mirror
 Sunday People
 Sunday Telegraph

Agencies

Associated Press
 Foreign Press Association
 Reuters
 United Press International
 United Press International Television News
 Visnews

Journalists

Sir Geoffrey Cox, CBE, ex-editor Independent Television News
 Mr David Fairhall, The Guardian
 Mr Max Hastings, The Standard
 Mr Simon Jenkins and Mr Jim Meacham, The Economist

Journalists' Organisations

Institute of Journalists
 National Union of Journalists

Regional Press

Aldershot News Series
 Birmingham Evening Mail Series
 Brecon and Radnor Express and Powys County Times
 Bristol United Press
 Cheshire County Newspapers Limited
 Chronicle and Echo, Northampton
 Croydon Advertiser Group

Cumbrian Newspapers Group
Derby Evening Telegraph
Dorset Evening Echo
Echo, Sunderland
Evening Advertiser, Swindon
Evening Times, Glasgow
Glasgow Herald
Gloucestershire Echo
Heart of England Newspapers, Leamington Spa
Leicester Mercury
Lincolnshire Standard Group
London and Essex Guardian Newspapers Limited
Mid-Somerset Series
Morning Telegraph, Sheffield
North-Eastern Evening Gazette Limited, Middlesborough
Pulman's Weekly News, Somerset
Reading Newspaper Group
Rochdale Observer Group
Sandwell Evening Mail, West Midlands
Shields Gazette, Tyne and Wear
Southern Evening Echo, Southampton
Surrey Herald Newspapers
Telegraph and Argus, Bradford
The Birmingham Post
The Hinckley Times, Leicestershire
The Mercury, Scarborough
The Northern Echo, Darlington
The News, Portsmouth
The West Briton, Cornwall
The Yorkshire Post
Thomson Regional Newspapers Limited, London
United Newspapers, London
Yorkshire Evening Post
Western Gazette
Western Mail, Cardiff
Willesden & Brent Chronicle and Kilburn Times
Windsor, Slough and Eton Express

Association of Free Newspapers
The Guild of British Newspaper Editors
The Scottish Daily Newspaper Society.

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Centre for Journalism Studies

Sub Group Visit 31 May-2 June to Belgium and Holland:Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe

General R L Lawson (USAF)

Chief of Staff

Air Vice Marshal J A Gilbert(RAF)

Assistant Chief of Staff, Policy Division

Rear Admiral J Rodocanachi(CA CF)

Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence
Division

Major General L Trinchieri(IT Army)

Deputy Assistant Chief of Staff,
Operations Division

Brigadier R Kendrick

United Kingdom National Military
Representative

Col J A Russell(UK)

Chief Special Projects Branch, Policy
Division

Col G W Williams(USAF)

Staff Officer, Office of Scientific
Adviser

Col G T Bratz(US Army)

Chief Press Information Officer

Flt Lt R D King(WRAF)

Assistant Chief of Protocol

Headquarters Allied Forces Central Europe

General F Von Senger und Etterlin(GE)	Commander-in-Chief
Air Chief Marshal Sir John Gingell, KCB, CBE(RAF)	Deputy Commander-in-Chief
Lieutenant General J Segers(BE)	Chief of Staff
Colonel W J Bittles, OBE	Chief Press Information Officer
Lieutenant Colonel Martens(GE)	Personal Assistant to Commander-in-Chief

United Kingdom Delegation NATO

Mr R J Alston	Head of Chancery
Air Commodore V L Warrington, OBE	Deputy Military Representative
Mr C V Balmer	1st Secretary, Defence Section
Mr J C Jarvis	2nd Secretary, Defence Section

Sub Group Visit 13-17 June to Israel:HM Embassy, Tel Aviv

HE Mr Patrick Moberly, CMG	Ambassador
Mr W K Prendergast	1st Secretary
Group Captain P Carter(RAF)	Defence, Naval and Air Attache

Israeli Government

Brigadier General Y Even	Israeli Defence Force Spokesman
Mr M Dolinsky	Director Government Press Office
Dr Y Rotenstreich	Chairman Appeals Committee
Brigadier General Y Shani	Israeli Defence Force Chief Censor

Media

Dr G Berli	Chairman Foreign Press Association
Mr H Goodman	Jerusalem Post
Mr A Oren	Davar
Mr D Rogers	Reuters
Mr D Shipler	New York Times
Mr B Siemans	ABC (TV)
Mrs Hannah Zemer	Editor Davar

Universities

Dr Judith Elizur	Hebrew University
Dr Dina Goren	Tel Aviv University

WITNESSES GIVING ORAL EVIDENCEFormer Minister and Member of Parliament

The Rt Hon Dr John Gilbert, MP

Former Ministers and Former Members of Parliament

The Rt Hon Sir Angus Maude, TD (now Baron Maude of Stratford-upon-Avon)
The Rt Hon Sir John Nott, KCB

Former Permanent Under Secretary, Ministry of Defence

The Rt Hon Sir Frank Cooper, GCB, CMG

Government Departments(i) Cabinet Office

Mr J L Wright, OBE

Head of Telecommunications Secretariat

(ii) Central Office of Information

Mr D D Grant
Mr P Abbott

Director General
Departmental Planning Officer

(iii) Home Office

Mr N C Sanderson

F6 Division, Emergency Services

(iv) Ministry of Defence

Lieutenant General Sir
Maurice Johnston, KCB, OBE
Mr J M Stewart
Mr N Taylor
Brigadier D J Ramsbotham, CBE
Mr C S Ponting, OBE

Deputy Chief of Defence Staff
Assistant Under Secretary (Defence Staff)
Chief of Public Relations
Director Public Relations (Army)
Defence Secretariat 15(Legal)

(v) 10 Downing Street

Mr B Ingham

Chief Press Secretary

Defence Press and Broadcasting Committee

Rear Admiral W N Ash, CB, MVO

Secretary

British Telecom

Mr D R Watson
 Mr J V Goodman
 Mr J M Anderson

Head of Defence Section, Inland Division
 Deputy Chief Engineer
 Head of Government Communications Group

Media

Mr G G Collard

Vice President, The Guild of British
 Newspaper Editors and Editorial Director,
 Croydon Advertiser

The Rt Hon W F Deedes, MC, DL
 Mr R J Edwards
 Mr D Fairhall
 Mr H A Frere
 Mr M Hastings

Editor, Daily Telegraph
 Editor, Sunday Mirror
 The Guardian
 Reuters and ex-United Press International
 The Standard

Mr D N Herbert

Chairman, Parliamentary and Legal
 Committee, The Guild of British Newspaper
 Editors; and Editorial Director, Westminster
 Press Limited

Mr J Meacham
 Mr M Nicholson
 Mr P Osnos
 Mr D J G Sells
 Dr K H Wocker

The Economist
 Independent Television News
 The Washington Post
 BBC Television
 Norddeutscher Rundfunk, Westdeutscher
 Rundfunk and Die Zeit

GLOSSARY OF TECHNICAL TERMS

Band-width	The frequency range available for use in any given communications system. The wider the band-width (ie broad-band) the better the quality and the greater the quantity of traffic that can be passed.
Burst Transmission	A radio transmission system in which messages are stored for a given time and then sent at many times more than the normal rate. They are recorded when received and slowed down to the normal rate for the user.
Direct broadcasting by satellite (DBS)	Scheduled for 1986, the BBC and IBA will operate two DBS channels each; this will mean that television programmes can be beamed direct to any subscriber within the satellite's footprint (all of the United Kingdom and parts of Western Europe).
Digital	Information to be passed is reduced to a pulse format. Voice, teleprinter, computer, data, still- and moving-pictures can all be reduced to the form of digital pulses. A higher quality of reproduction is possible than has been available with other techniques.
Encryption	The encoding of a signal before or during transmission to ensure its security. (Decryption is the decoding on receipt or during reception of the signal to render it once more intelligible.)
Electronic News Gathering (ENG)	The use of light-weight cameras which permit direct recording on video-tape, with immediate play-back of pictures and without processing. Material can thus be transmitted instantaneously via any commercial system providing a video-link (satellite, terrestrial or cable).
European Broadcasting Union (EBU)	The co-ordinating body responsible for radio and television affairs in Western Europe.
European Telecommunications Satellite Organisation (EUTELSAT)	The organisation which has the responsibility for the establishment and operation of the European Communications Satellite project.
Footprint	The area in which people can receive (or transmit) information using a communications satellite.

International Maritime
Satellite Organisation
(INMARSAT)

The organisation which has the responsibility for formation and control of a global maritime satellite system.

International Telecommuni-
cations Satellite
Organisation (INTELSAT)

The organisation which has the responsibility for developing and managing global commercial satellite communications systems.

Mercury Communications

Mercury Communications plc is the only major UK holder, other than British Telecom, of a licence which permits the operation of a public telecommunications service.

Microwave

Terrestrial or satellite transmissions which use electromagnetic radiation in the frequency range between 300 MHz and 300 GHz.

Transponder

A transmitter/receiver on a satellite which amplifies and automatically re-broadcasts a signal received from a ground transmitter.

Tropospheric-scatter
communication

A radio system which permits communication over a moderate distance (from 70 to 600 miles) by scattering radio waves using irregularities in the troposphere (the lower layer of the earth's atmosphere).

THE DEFENCE (GENERAL) REGULATIONS, 1939, REGULATION 3(1)

"Subject to the provisions of this paragraph, no person shall:

- (1) obtain,
- (2) record, communicate to any other person or publish or,
- (3) have in possession any document containing, or any other record whatsoever of, any information being, or purporting to be, information with respect to any of the following matters, that is to say:
 - (a) the number, description, armament, equipment, disposition, movement or condition of any of His Majesty's forces, vessels or aircraft;
 - (b) any operations or projected operations of any of His Majesty's forces, vessels or aircraft;
 - (c) any measures for the defence or fortification of any place on behalf of His Majesty;
 - (d) the number, description or location of any prisoners of war;
 - (e) munitions of war;
 - (f) any other matter whatsoever information as to which would or might be directly or indirectly useful to an enemy;

Provided that this paragraph shall not apply to anything done by any servant of His Majesty or constable acting in the course of his duty as such, or to anything done for the purpose of the performance of a contract with His Majesty; and a person shall not be guilty of an offence or contravention of this paragraph in respect of anything done by him if he proves that it was done under any authority or permission granted by or on behalf of His Majesty, or that the doing of that thing was not likely to prejudice the defence of the realm or the efficient prosecution of the war."

EXTRACT FROM "REGULATIONS FOR PRESS REPRESENTATIVES", 1942The Collection of Information and Censorship

22. To enable Press Representatives to obtain their material, the following arrangements will be made:

- (i) Summaries of information produced by the General Staff for the Press.
- (ii) Periodical Press conferences.
- (iii) Visits to troops. Press Representatives will be free to go anywhere in the zone of the Field Force so long as they are accompanied by an officer.
- (iv) Matters to which reference is forbidden. It is impossible to lay down permanent directions on this matter as, in certain cases, the list may be affected by developments in the situation. Reference to the following cannot normally be made in Press reports:
 - (a) Composition and location of formations.
 - (b) Details of troop movements.
 - (c) Operational Orders.
 - (d) Criticism of a personal nature.
 - (e) Plans and intended operations.
 - (f) Casualties.
 - (g) Organization.
 - (h) Place names.
 - (i) Camouflage methods.
 - (j) Names or numbers of formations and units.

NB. There is naturally no objection to referring to units as an artillery unit, west country regiment, Highland regiment, etc. In certain circumstances permission may be given for names of regiments to be mentioned. Numbers of battalions or other units can never be mentioned.

23. In describing a defensive position occupied, or being prepared by our troops, it is essential that such description should include no information of value to the enemy. To quote some obvious instances, no reference should be made to the nature of anti-tank or other obstacles, fortifications, depth of position, etc. It is naturally permissible to talk in general terms of trenches, wire, concrete, etc.

24. Press Copy. All material for publication in the Press, for newsreel commentaries, or for broadcasting, will be submitted for censorship in triplicate. Censorship regulations are issued by the General Staff. The OC PR unit will be responsible that all Press Representatives attached to his unit are fully conversant with local censorship regulations.

25. Private Correspondence. The private correspondence of Press Representatives is subject to censorship in the same way as the private correspondence from troops in the zone of the Army.

Private or business communications can only be sent from the zone of the Army through the Army Postal Service. Further details will be communicated by the senior PR Service officer.

26. Press Representatives will not leave the zone of the British Army without the permission of the senior PR Service officer who will arrange for the issue of any necessary permit.

27. Press Representatives have the status of officers and are subject to military air force law as officers when in the zone of the British Army or Air Force abroad. They have no executive power as officers.

28. Press Representatives are free to converse with the troops whenever they wish to do so, subject to the approval of the conducting officer or any officer present with the troops in question. Press Representatives are requested to refrain from discussing political questions with troops, from conversing with troops at work or on guard, or from discussing subjects which are clearly secret (see para 22(iv) above).

29. Sketches, Photographs and Films. Press Representatives are forbidden to make sketches or to take photographs and cinematograph films without authority or, when such authority has been given, to forward them for publication to any newspapers, journals, agencies or other organizations other than those which they represent. The permission to make sketches and to take photographs and films may be withdrawn or curtailed at the discretion of the C-in-C or the Air Officer C-in-C, the Forces in the field.

All sketches, photographs and films made or taken with the field forces are subject to censorship. Sketches and undeveloped negatives of photographs and films must be handed to a PR Service officer, who will arrange for their censorship and transmission to the addressee.

Arrangements are made whenever possible for local development of films and prints of Press photographers and cine-cameramen. After censorship and any necessary cutting, they will be despatched - as in the case of Press articles - to the War Office or Air Ministry.

30. Press Communications. When necessary the War Office, in conjunction with the appropriate department of the General Post Office, will be responsible for assisting the Press to obtain adequate facilities for the despatch of copy. The costs of any such service will either be borne by individual newspapers or, in the case of a consolidated charge, recovered through the Newspaper Proprietors Association.

EXTRACT FROM FIELD SERVICE POCKET BOOK, 193919. Regulations for the contents of correspondence

1. The objects of censorship can only be attained by the rigorous suppression of certain classes of subject-matter in correspondence.

Allusions to any of the following matters are forbidden at all times in private correspondence during a war, whether relating to naval, military, or air forces or operations:

- (i) Strength, moral or physical state, or organisation of our forces, including any comment on the absence or presence in the theatre of war of a unit or formation, or disclosure regarding the formation to which any unit is attached or belongs.
- (ii) Location or movement of any naval, military, or air force units or detachments, arrival or lack or reinforcements.
- (iii) Armament or equipment of any kind.
- (iv) Distinguishing signs used for the identification of formations, units, and their transport.
- (v) Plans and forecasts or orders for future operations, whether known or merely rumoured or surmised.
- (vi) Communications - such as the use, condition, or probable extensions of roads, railways, or other transportation facilities, bridging operations, etc.
- (vii) State of the maintenance services, including any reference to reserves.
- (viii) Position or description of billets, bivouacs or camps.
- (ix) Casualties before official publication.
- (x) Effect of any action by the enemy. Any remark which might tend, if published, to encourage the enemy, to cause despondency in our own forces or people, or to incite a feeling of hostility among the people in the theatre of war or in neutral countries.
- (xi) Criticisms and statements calculated to bring into disrepute our forces or those of our allies.

2. Private correspondence in the field will be in plain language. Codes, ciphers and shorthand will not be permitted. Picture postcards will be suppressed by franking officers if they may in any way disclose the writer's present or past location, or the route by which movements of the writer's unit have taken place. It is not permitted either in the address or text of corres-

pondence to connect the name of a place with that of a unit, or the name of a unit with the designation of an army post office.

3. It is forbidden to send, or to attempt to send, to unauthorized persons:

- (i) Official documents, including intelligence summaries, orders, reports, maps, etc, or to disclose their contents except in the course of duty.
- (ii) Any document captured from the enemy, or found in places occupied by the enemy, and any document containing information about the enemy.
- (iii) Any official document belonging to the civil authorities in allied or enemy territory.

4. It is forbidden to despatch to neutral or enemy countries:

Photographs or pictorial matter of any kind from whatever source they may have been obtained.

5. It is forbidden to communicate to the Press except through the duly authorized channel.

6. It is forbidden to send through the post photographs or films except those taken under proper authority.

7. It is forbidden to insert advertisements or letters in any publication inviting correspondence with strangers, or to enter into correspondence with any stranger in response to such advertisements or invitations.

The greatest caution and reserve are necessary in acknowledging presents from unknown donors, or in replying to trade circulars from unknown merchants and dealers, especially those in neutral countries.

8. It is forbidden to make use of the civil postal service in a theatre of operations, or to transmit correspondence by the hand of an officer, soldier or civilian proceeding outside the theatre of operations, except by recognised military messenger service.

EXTRACT FROM MILITARY ASSISTANCE COMMAND VIETNAM DIRECTIVE 360-1, ANNEX ARules Governing Public Release of US Military Information in Vietnam

1. Future plans, operations, or strikes.
2. Information concerning rules of engagement.
3. Amounts of ordnance and fuel moved by support units or on hand in combat units and depots (ordnance includes weapons systems and ammunition).
4. During an operation, unit designations and troop movements, tactical deployments, name of operation, and size of friendly forces involved.
5. Intelligence unit activities, method of operation, or specific locations.
6. Exact number and type of casualties or damage suffered by friendly units.
7. Number of sorties and the amount of ordnance expended on strikes outside of the Republic of Vietnam.
8. Information on aircraft taking off for strikes, enroute to, or returning from target areas. Information on strikes while they are in progress.
9. Identity of air units and locations of air bases from which aircraft are launched on combat operations.
10. Number of aircraft damaged or any other indicator of effectiveness or ineffectiveness of ground anti-aircraft defenses.
11. Tactical specifics, such as altitudes, courses, speeds, or angles of attack. (General descriptions such as "low and fast" may be used).
12. Information on, or confirmation of, planned strikes which do not take place for any reason, including bad weather.
13. Specific identification of enemy weapons systems utilized to down friendly aircraft.
14. Details concerning downed aircraft while search and rescue (SAR) operations are in progress.
15. Aerial photos of fixed installations.

EXTRACTS FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF PALESTINE DEFENCE (EMERGENCY)
REGULATIONS, 1945⁽¹⁾
PART VIII - CENSORSHIP

87. - (1) The Censor may by order prohibit generally or specifically the publishing of matter the publishing of which, in his opinion, would be, or be likely to be or become, prejudicial to the defence of Palestine or to the public safety or to public order.

(2) Any person who publishes any matter in contravention of an order under this regulation and the proprietor and editor of any publication in which it is published and the person who wrote, printed, drew or designed, the matter shall be guilty of an offence against these Regulations.

88. - (1) The Censor may by order prohibit the importation or exportation, or the printing or publishing of any publication (which prohibition shall be deemed to extend to any copy or portion of such publication or of any issue or number thereof), the importation, exportation, printing or publishing of which, in his opinion, would be, or be likely to be or become, prejudicial to the defence of Palestine or to the public safety or to public order.

(2) Any person who contravenes any order under this regulation and the proprietor and editor of the publication in relation to which the contravention occurs, and any person (unless in the opinion of the Court he ought fairly to be excused) who has in his possession or control, or in premises of which he is the occupier, any publication prohibited under this regulation or who posts, delivers or receives any such publication, shall be guilty of an offence against these Regulations.

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97. - (1) The Censor may by order require the proprietor, editor, printer or publisher of any publication, or the proprietor or manager of any printing press or printing business, or the author of, or any person about to print or publish, any matter, to submit to the Censor before printing or publishing any matter intended for printing or publishing.

(2) Any such order may be given either generally or in respect of any particular subject or class of subject, and in the case of a publication published at regular or irregular intervals, may be given in respect of any particular issue or class of issues or of all issues for a specified period.

(3) Any person who contravenes an order under this regulation shall be guilty of an offence against these Regulations.

(1) As amended in 1947

COMPARISON OF MEDIA OUTLETS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM, 1940 AND 1983

	<u>1940</u>	<u>1983(i)</u>
National Daily and Sunday	19	18
London Evening	3	1
Provincial Daily, Evening and Sunday	130	95
Provincial Weekly	760	995
"Free" Papers	-	560(ii)
Ethnic Press	-	55(iii)
"Alternative" Press	-	170(iv)
Periodicals	Not known	6,000
National Radio Channels	2(v)	4
BBC Overseas Services(vi)	22	40
Local Radio Stations		
BBC (includes "opt-out" and regional services)	-	41(vii)
IBA (local)	-	40
Other Radio Services	-	8(viii)
Television Channels	-	4(ix)
Cable Television Systems	-	13(x)
Foreign Correspondents	Not known	700+

NOTES:

- (i) Statistics as at July 1983.
- (ii) Source: Association of Free Newspapers.
- (iii) Source: Commission for Racial Equality.
- (iv) Source: Benn's Press Directory, 1983.
- (v) In 1940 there were only two national radio services: the Home and Forces networks. Each service broadcast 18 hours of material per day with no regional or local variations.
- (vi) In 1940 there was the Empire Service in English together with broadcasts in 21 foreign languages. Today the BBC broadcasts in 38 different languages, as well as operating its World Service programme.
- (vii) There are currently 32 BBC local and regional radio stations which include two in the Channel Islands and Radios Scotland, Ulster and Wales. In Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland there are nine local community radio stations which opt out from the national regional services for only a short time (typically between one and three hours) each week-day.

(viii) Other Radio Services:

British Forces Broadcasting Service
Radio Luxembourg (London)
Radio Basildon (Commercial Cable)
Greenwich Sound (Commercial Cable)
Telford WSM Community Radio Ltd (Cable)
Radio Thames Mead (Commercial Cable)
National Association of Hospital Broadcasting Organisations (NAHBO)
Manx Radio

(ix) BBC 1 and ITV both have regional programme variations at certain times of the day. BBC 2 is identical throughout the UK. Channel Four, which is without regional variation except for advertisements, is known as S4C in Wales.

(x) The number of existing subscription pilot schemes.

THE DEFENCE PRESS AND BROADCASTING COMMITTEEGovernment Representatives

Sir Clive Whitmore, KCB, CVO	Chairman. Permanent Under Secretary of State, Ministry of Defence.
Sir Brian Cubbon, KCB	Permanent Under Secretary of State, Home Office
Mr E Broadbent, CB, CMG	Second Permanent Under Secretary of State, Ministry of Defence
Mr P R H Wright, CMG	Deputy Under Secretary of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Press and Broadcasting Representatives(i) For the Periodical Publishers' Association

Mr J M Ramsden	Chairman, Press and Broadcasting side. Editor-in-Chief, Flight International
Mr J Bishop	Editor and Publisher, Illustrated London News

(ii) For The Newspaper Publishers' Association

Mr J K Donlan	Managing Editor, News and Special Projects, The Sun
Mr G Evans	Managing Editor, Sunday Telegraph
Mr C Wilson	Executive Editor, Home and Foreign, The Times

(iii) For the Newspaper Society

Mr A Webster, OBE	
Mr K Whetstone, OBE	Editor-in-Chief, Birmingham Evening Mail Series

(iv) For the Scottish Daily Newspaper Society

Mr R Smith	Editor, Evening Express
------------	-------------------------

(v) For the British Broadcasting Corporation

Mr A H Protheroe, MBE, TD	Assistant Director General
---------------------------	----------------------------

(vi) For Independent Television News

Mr D Horobin	Deputy Editor
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Secretariat

Rear Admiral W N Ash, CB, MVO	Secretary
Major General P R Kay, CB, MBE	Associate Secretary

CONTROL OF INTERNATIONAL TELEPHONE AND TELEXGovernment Telephone Preference Scheme

1. A scheme already exists for reducing the number of telephone calls, both internal and international, made by subscribers in this country. This is called the Government Telephone Preference Scheme. The scheme, which is operated by British Telecom (BT) on behalf of central Government provides for telephone lines connected to the public switched telephone network to be classified according to three categories: lines vital to the prosecution of war and national survival after an attack on the United Kingdom; additional lines necessary to maintain the life of the community during a civil emergency; and lines for which there is no entitlement.
2. If the traffic loading of the public switched telephone network needed to be reduced, the first stage (Preference 2) would be to deprive some, possibly all, of the third category of the ability to make outgoing calls. This would reduce the percentage of customers to about 10% (police, hospitals, doctors, telephone kiosks, the BBC and IBA - but not the Press - would maintain their service). In a more serious emergency (Preference 1) even doctors and many hospitals would lose the ability to make outgoing calls. In times of crisis or war, the authority for introduction of either scheme would rest with the Government.
3. Several points should be noted. First, the rationale for the Preference scheme relates entirely to over-loading of the public switched telephone network. Because of the inevitable effect on morale which the reduction in lines would cause, present plans foresee the introduction of either scheme being delayed for as long as possible in wartime.
4. Secondly, the majority of telephone numbers barred from outgoing service would still be able to receive incoming calls. This is important because any overseas correspondent wishing to pass material to his office abroad by means of the telephone could simply arrange to be rung up at specified hours (under Preference 2 working he could, moreover, even use a telephone kiosk to make outgoing calls). The same is, of course, true of enemy agents.
5. Where spies are concerned there is a further complication, in that exchanges overseas can route calls automatically through a second exchange before they reach their destination. Thus the Russians might programme their calls through Geneva to London, and London would never know that the call had not originated in Geneva. Although agreement in principle has been reached in NATO for direct services with Warsaw Pact countries to be regulated and subsequently severed in major war, and for services with neutral countries to be regulated, monitoring of calls has not proved politically acceptable to most NATO countries: this particular loop-hole would not therefore be closed.

Telex

6. There is a much higher level of sophistication in telex switching equipment, since telex lends itself more readily to being handled by computer. Telex

customer machines also have an answer-back facility, and the caller can therefore be interrogated to establish his identity. There are, nonetheless, currently no plans for Government control of telex in wartime - not even of the rather rudimentary kind provided by the Telephone Preference scheme.

Possible Improvements

7. In view of the possibilities for the enemy to gain valuable information from this country by means of our open communications system, we asked BT for advice on the measures which would be needed for restricting international telephone and telex calls to and from this country to a list of specified essential customers; and for an indication of the penalties involved.

8. They were unable to carry out a detailed study in the time available and advised that such a study could take up to 18 months and cost some £125,000. They gave, however, the following broad indication of times-scales for implementation of the scheme, the implications and the possible order of costs.

9. The time-scales for the availability of the necessary computer control arrangements are dependent on the installation of new digital local, trunk and international exchanges throughout the United Kingdom telephone network; and on the installation of new local exchanges throughout the United Kingdom telex network (international telex exchanges using modern technology already exist). Current BT plans envisage completion of the telephone programme by 1995 and the telex programme by 1990. There might, however, be specific areas of the country in which completion of these programmes was delayed; moreover there would be no point in introducing a sophisticated control scheme for the telex service in advance of a scheme for the telephone service, since calls would only be diverted by the user from telex to telephone. 1995 would thus be the earliest date at which the scheme could be fully operational. An early decision would, however, be needed to authorise the scheme.

Telephone

10. Provision for computer storage of individual telephone numbers with different permitted levels of access would need to be centralised, possibly on a one-per-telephone-Region basis. This would be necessary to control outgoing international calls, because every local exchange in the country would require access to such information before deciding how to deal with a particular call. For incoming international service, provision of a single computer system with a look-up table containing numbers permitted to receive international calls could be envisaged, connected to all international exchanges. In addition, there would need to be a network of data lines joining all international, trunk and principal local exchanges and the unique computers storing customer line records, to allow circulation of the data. One possible drawback should be noted: we were told that interference with the flow of incoming calls could generate such congestion in the international telephone network that even preference customers' services would be affected. This possibility would clearly need to be taken into account in considering the proposed scheme.

11. To obtain a reasonably accurate assessment of costs, it would be necessary to estimate the number of customer line records which would need to be held, and the size of the corresponding computer systems and data networks. A possible preliminary order of costs would be as follows:

a. Implementing software modifications to all BT local, trunk and international exchanges for outgoing control, plus international exchanges for incoming control (excluding development costs):

£2M

b. Provision of 10 Regional computers for outgoing control, each £0.25M to £0.5M according to size (excluding accommodation, which may not be a BT commitment):

£2.5M to £5M

c. Provision of a single computer for incoming control, according to size (excluding accommodation):

£1M to £2M

d. There would also be ongoing costs, consisting of rental charges for a network of data lines; maintenance of computer facilities; and administrative arrangements for up-dating permitted user lists.

Telex

12. The facilities required for the telex service would be of a similar nature but on a smaller scale, because the size of the telex system (number of exchanges, customers etc) is smaller. The proportion of total telex calls which are international is, however, extremely high compared to the telephone service; although, therefore, costs would be lower they would be of a similar order of magnitude.

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