

M. J. Cole
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FRANKS - PUBLICATION ARRANGEMENTS

The Franks Report will be published at 3.30pm on Tuesday, January 18, 1983. At the same time the Prime Minister will make a statement to the House. Franks and his Commission are not holding a press conference or giving interviews.

Mechanics

As of now, there will be no CFRs. Copies of the document will be available in the Vote Office and Lobby at 3.30pm.

The Lobby is exercised about the lack of CFRs from two points of view:

- their own convenience;
- the problem of getting extensive coverage into first editions.

The decision to publish without CFRs has nothing to do with the unresolved problem over the wholesale breach of the Falklands honours and awards embargo. But the lack of CFRs will no doubt be a sharp reminder of the value of the system to the media.

The Government's decision to publish without advance copies is not without precedent. It considers the report should be presented first to Parliament.

I have not yet ruled out the possibility of using the "locked room technique" whereby recipients of CFRs are confined to a locked room until publication time. But I think it unlikely I shall recommend the Prime Minister to allow it.

Question 1 - Does the meeting think we should employ the technique?

Because of the shortage of time, the Lobby is unenthusiastic about a Lobby on Tuesday afternoon. Largely for that reason it has ruled out a joint briefing for Lobby, Defence and Diplomatic Correspondents but it may ask me for a quick check Lobby.

I would be grateful if Mr Taylor and Mr Goulden would hold themselves in readiness on Tuesday and Wednesday to give briefings if it is felt that there should be one or more.

Question 2 - Does the meeting think we should offer a briefing for Lobby Defence and Diplomatic Correspondents on Tuesday after the Prime Minister has sat down regardless of the Lobby's view. If so, where? And when?

Question 3 -- Does the meeting agree we should consider early on Wednesday whether to offer a joint briefing that day, or to operate separately with our own clientele, bearing in mind the objective of the exercise is to close ranks and to keep them closed?

Because the media will be very short of time on Tuesday, I have been considering how I might legitimately help them. The line I propose to take at the 11.00am Lobby on Tuesday is at Annex I.

Question 4 - Any comments on Annex I?

Again because the media will be very short of time, they will try to secure the maximum number of copies for their organisations. We need to be clear who is to get copies from Departments and how liaison and control may be established.

Question 5 - Agree Miss Christopherson should formulate a system with Chief Press Officers on our behalf?

Radio/TV

After publication there will be considerable pressure on the Government for Ministers of the relevant Departments to appear. No doubt Lord Carrington, John Nott, Humphrey Atkins and Richard Luce will be responding to requests. The Prime Minister takes the view that Ministers should not take up interviews on Tuesday; her statement should be allowed to stand on its own. Departments/offices involved have been so informed.

Question 6 - Agree we consult informally on Wednesday in the light of the report's reception on whether Ministers should take up invitations?

Substance

The report is better for the Government than might have been expected. The risk is that it will be called a 'whitewash'. This risk is increased by the need which some journalists are likely to feel to justify themselves; and by the political opposition feeling that they have been robbed.

On the other hand, since the Government has been acquitted on the major charges, we shall need to be ready to meet attacks on points of detail; and attempts to drive wedges between Departments, notably between No 10 and FCO.

Sir Robert Armstrong has sent briefing to the Permanent Secretaries in the FCO and MoD and no doubt Mr Goulden has had access to this.

In the meantime I identify below some of the more important secondary issues of presentation we need to watch:

- Government policy never formally discussed outside FCO after January 1981;
- FCO officials did not attach sufficient weight to changing Argentine attitudes;
- lack of a prompt reply to Prime Minister's call for contingency plans;
- observations on JIC procedures.

Question 7 - Any other major secondary points we should have in mind?
Content briefing covers these points?

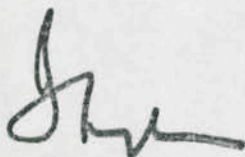
Other Issues

Subject to the Prime Minister's statement, we need answers to, or lines on, the following points:

- how will the report be followed up?
- who will speak in the debate and when will it be held?
- any outstanding Falklands issues - eg. new airfield?
- how soon did members of Cabinet and others - eg. principals involved in drama - get copies of Report before publication?

- how much has been excised from the report for security reasons and does Lord Franks accept excises?
- did the Commission see any others in addition to those listed in the Annex - ie. can all the witnesses be identified?
- why no CFRs?
- why no Ministers offering themselves for interview?
- why no press conference by Franks or offers by them of interviews?
- titles, publication dates of all relevant documents starting from original Shackleton Report?

Question 8 - Any other points to be followed up?



B. INGHAM

17 January 1983

Line to be taken with Media at No 10's 11.00am Lobby, January 18, 1983.

The Franks Report, as you know, will be published at 3.30pm when the Prime Minister will make a statement to the House. There will be no press conferences by Franks or the Government, and no comment from the Government other than from the Prime Minister in the House.

I, and my colleagues at the FCO and MoD, will hold ourselves in readiness to give you a briefing if you require one later this afternoon or early evening.

My advice is that you will be so busy that you feel it would be better not to have a Lobby this afternoon.

I fully recognise that you will have to work fast this afternoon. But the Government has decided that the report should be presented immediately and straightforwardly to Parliament without any preliminaries.

I will however try to help you, as I did on the Defence lessons of the Falklands White Paper.

The report runs to 339 paragraphs, and has a number of Annexes. It is 105 pages long and it will sell for £6.10 at HMSO. So it is a substantial document.

But you may find it easier to handle than you may now fear.

First let me remind you of the background. Prime Minister announced setting up of the Committee under Lord Franks on July 6, 1982.

It was charged with reviewing the way Government responsibilities in relation to the Falkland Islands and Dependencies were discharged in the period leading up to Argentine invasion "taking account of all such factors in previous years as are relevant".

The Commission met first time July 29. It held 42 meetings. Submitted its report to the Prime Minister on New Year's Eve, within the six month target it informally set for itself.

Paragraph 5 sets out the documents the Committee was provided with, including secret intelligence reports and assessments and Departmental files.

Those who gave evidence are at Annex E.

The main body of the report falls into 4 sections:

1. Paras 15-70 - history of dispute between UK and Argentina.
2. Paras 71-160 - sequence of events and development of police since Mrs Thatcher's Government took office.
3. Paras 161-259 - Detailed account of events from Davidoff's landing on March 19 to invasion on April 2.
4. Paras 260-339 - Observations, comments, judgements.

Now if I were dealing with the report for inside pages I would:

- divide the report between 4 reporters and tell those handling the first 3 to summarise tightly;
- tell the fourth handling Chapter 4 - the observations/conclusions chapter - to spread himself because this is the key chapter; because it is the analysis of the events set out in the 3 previous chapters and it is what you have been waiting for. But I would also urge that this fourth reporter should also take in Annex A. This should be of intense interest to the media because it sets out in the form of assertion and answer the facts on the more important allegations that have been made by the media in the course of the Falklands affair.

Now for those of you who, working for evenings, agencies and radio and tv - the absolutely immediate media - and those writing for outside pages, my advice would be to concentrate on Chapter 4 and Annex A which together with the Prime Minister's statement should see you through amply. There is of course no substitute for reading the lot but Chapter 4 is crucial.

Paragraph 260 sets out the two crucial questions which Franks addressed Paragraph 266 and 339 give the answers to those 2 questions.

That is as it were your "flash" material.

The rest of the Chapter sets out the Commission's analysis and observations on a large number of other questions - for example, developments of policy; negotiating options; Endurance; contingency planning; handling of issues; intelligence; Davidoff's link with invasion; deployment of Task Force, and so on.

Now for those who want to do "flash" observations from Chapter 4. My suggestion is to work through paragraphs which you will find are grouped and develop arguments leading up to an observation/comment.

[I would then propose to suggest paragraph numbers for major points without identifying subjects].

That I hope is helpful.

Any questions?