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FEJ

20-7-82

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Mrs Beaver -  
DF/1

Note for Record

BRIEFING FOR EDITORS ON THE  
FALKLAND ISLAND EMERGENCY

With the Secretary of State's approval, PUS invited Editors from the major media organisations to a briefing at the Ministry of Defence at 6.00 pm on Wednesday 7 April. A list of those who attended is shown at Annex A (together with the names of their correspondents with the Task Force).

2. It was agreed that the meeting would consist of three parts:
  - (I) An opening statement by PUS (which would be entirely private).
  - (II) Background briefing on the situation by MOD staffs (which could be used unattributably).
  - (III) A closing discussion (which would again be private).

Part I

3. PUS said that he welcomed an opportunity to discuss the arrangements for media coverage of the military aspects of the Falklands situation. No doubt the Editors would have requests to make and the Ministry of Defence would want to be as helpful as possible. But there was also concern that information should not be published which could assist the Argentinians, inhibit operations or put the Task Force and its crews at risk. He would like to come back to discuss this further in Part III.

Part II

4. Short briefings were given on the Government's approach to the emergency by AUS(D Staff) (Mr Stewart) and on the Falkland Isles and Islanders by DD Ops (RoW) (Captain Lord RN - a former CO of HMS ENDURANCE). There followed questions covering the capability of the Argentinian Armed Forces, the 1977 deployment and the potential of the UK Task Force (Captain Livesey RN, Director of Naval Warfare and former CO of HMS INVINCIBLE took part in this).

Part III

5. Returning to discussion of media coverage of the emergency, PUS said that MOD was particularly concerned about publication of information in the following areas:

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- a. Details of operational plans or too much speculation about them.
- b. Details of operational capability.
- c. Information about intelligence, especially in the field of communications.
- d. Information about the location of units.

What this really amounted to was asking Editors to observe the D Notices, which had recently been revised, and particularly Notices 1 (Plans, Operational Capability) and 6 (Security and Intelligence). As usual the Secretary, Rear Admiral Ash, was ready to advise Editors over specific cases. There was also concern over Argentinian disinformation - an example was their exaggerated statements about the build up of their forces on the Falkland Islands.

6. In discussion, some Editors wondered whether speculation about British military intentions might not be as confusing to the Argentinians as it was helpful. There was also no way of preventing the Foreign Press from engaging in this, though they lacked the implicit authority of the British Press. It was suggested as a general criterion for Editors that they imagined what they would want to see broadcast or in print if they had a son aboard the Task Force.

7. Turning to assistance to the media, there was general satisfaction with the arrangements made by MOD for correspondents to join the Task Force (although complaints at some organisations not being represented eg the Sunday Telegraph [this has now been remedied]). It was agreed that there should be daily MOD briefings for correspondents in London, preferably with FCO representation. A further meeting with Editors would be arranged in a week to ten days' time.

8. The meeting finished at 7.10.

#### Comment

9. In general, Editors responded carefully but positively and were appreciative that the meeting had taken place. The high level of representation was noticeable. There was inevitably some concern at the possible fettering of editorial freedom - particularly over speculation on military intentions - but relief that the Government was not putting forward ideas for legal controls. It was implicit that the fact that the meeting had taken place would not itself be publicised.

#### Postscript

10. Since the meeting the MOD has started to receive requests from journalists writing pieces on the Falklands for guidance on particular areas of sensitivity.

*S Webb*

S WEBB  
PS/PUS

8 April 1982

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ITN	KELVIN MCGURK	EDITOR	TERRY SULLIVAN - WINDHILL
NEWSWEEK CONFERENCE	MICHAEL	CHIEF NEWSWEEK CONFERENCE	
SUNDAY MIRROR	PETER THOMPSON	DEP EDITOR	AUSTIN MCGURK - CANBERRA
FINANCIAL TIMES	G.D. OWEN	EDITOR	

SUBJECT: PUS EDITORS BRIEFING - FALKLANDS OPERATION  
 VENUE: HR 27 MOD MB  
 DATE: 7 APRIL 1982  
 TIME: 17.50 for 1800

CHAIRMAN: PUS  
 HCPR  
 DD of Ops (Row)  
 AUS (D STAFF)

	Newspaper, Agency, etc	Reporters	Photography	Other details
1.	BBC TELEVISION	ALAN PROTHEROE	A/DG	BRIAN HARRAHAN PRESENTER - HERMES
2.	BBC RADIO NEWS	LARRY HODGSON	EDITOR	ROBERT FOX - CANBERRA
3.	DAILY EXPRESS	CHRIS WARD	EDITOR	ROBERT MCGOVERN - SIR LANCELOT
4.	DAILY MAIL	DAVID ENGLISH	EDITOR	DAVID MORRIS - STROMNESS
5.	DAILY TELEGRAPH	WILLIAM DEEDES	EDITOR	MARLON INVINCIBLE
6.	NEWS OF THE WORLD	PHILIP WRACK	DEP. EDITOR	
7.	GUARDIAN	PETER PRESTON	EDITOR	PAUL KEEL - INVINCIBLE
8.	PRESS ASSOCIATION	DAVID CHIPP	ED-IN-CHIEF	WRITER PHOT } HERMES
9.	SUNDAY MIRROR	VIC BIRKIN	DEP EDITOR	
10.	ITN	DAVID NICHOLAS	EDITOR	MICHAEL NICHOLSON PRESENTER - HERMES
11.	IRN	PETER THORNTON	NEWS EDITOR	KEN SOBIDO - CANBERRA
12.	SUNDAY PEOPLE	NICHOLAS LOYD	EDITOR	
13.	SUNDAY TIMES	FRANK GILES	EDITOR	CORRESPONDENT ACCEPTED
14.	OBSERVER	DONALD TREFORD	EDITOR	CORRESPONDENT ACCEPTED
15.	TIMES	JOHN GRANT	DEP EDITOR	WITHEROW - INVINCIBLE
16.	SUNDAY TELEGRAPH	JOHN THOMPSON	EDITOR	
17.	SUNDAY EXPRESS	ROBERT MCWILLIAMS	DEP EDITOR	
18.	STAR	BRIAN STEEL	DEP EDITOR	MICHAEL SEAMAN - INVINCIBLE
19.	MAIL ON SUNDAY	IAIN WALLER	NEWS EDITOR	
20.	SUN	KELVIN MCKENZIE	EDITOR	TERRY SNOW - INVINCIBLE
21.	NEWSPAPER CONFERENCE	MALDONALD	CHAN NEWSPAPER CONFERENCE	
22.	DAILY MIRROR	PETER THOMPSON	DEP EDITOR	ALISTAIR MCGUEN - CANBERRA
23.	FINANCIAL TIMES	G.D. OWEN	EDITOR	
24.				
25.				
26.				