

EF

PUS/82/559
9/31/F

CPR

Copy to:
DCPR
DPR(N)
DPR(Army)
DPR(RAF)

20.5.82

DUS(P)

PR

Copied to all Ministers & S. Staff
on 20/5

PUBLIC RELATIONS - FALKLAND ISLANDS

We are approaching a new phase in the Falklands emergency and I think we need to be clear about the arrangements for public relations. I have no doubt further changes will be needed as we move along but I am equally in no doubt that to be clearer about the current situation would be extremely helpful.

2. You are in full charge of the Defence Public Relations Staff and responsible for its direction and co-ordination. It is quite clear that there must be a maximum effort and that we should make full use of all our resources, after proper consultation within the DPRS and with the Defence Staffs and the Defence Secretariat. We should continue to take a very active PR approach, although there will obviously be problems about political clearance and operational security.

3. I would like you yourself to concentrate on directing and organising the work and for this purpose you will need, on a temporary basis, some additional administrative help. Arrangements are in hand for this to be provided.

4. You should also pay especial attention to 3 other areas:

- a. overall relations with the media;
- b. the provision of facilities (including transmission of material from the Task Force);
- c. planning ahead.

5. You will have full responsibility for directing the overall activity and ensuring that it is a team effort. In this you should bring in fully the Service DPRs and you should have a daily meeting with DCPR, them and other principal staff concerned. There should be a senior PR officer on duty 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, chosen from those who are Codeword cleared.

6. As part of the overall effort, DCPR will concentrate on assembling and providing material to the media about both policy and operations on the Falkland Islands and will continue to respond to both political and military requirements. He will continue as our main - though not invariably exclusive - spokesman and reserves should be selected from the DPRS; whoever is the duty spokesman

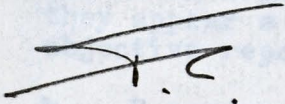
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

should attend the COS and also take directions from the Secretary of State on the day's events. DCPR will normally give background and unattributable briefings, supported by Service DPR and other staffs.

7. A News Release group under AUS(D Staff) will settle what current information is to be made available; the duty spokesman will participate.

8. I believe that we need to develop and set out more fully a PR policy. Please would you, DCPR, and the Service DPRs, work this up in conjunction with MOD Staffs, consulting the FCO and SAPU, and then put it to me. The attached note outlines some of the key issues.



FRANK COOPER
18 May 1982

Further Distribution

| | |
|---------------|--------------|
| S of S | DUS(P) |
| Minister (AF) | DUS(N) |
| US of S (AF) | DUS(Army) |
| CDS | DUS(Air) |
| CNS | DUS(PL) |
| CGS | DUS(Pol)(PE) |
| CAS | ACDS(Pol) |
| VCDS(P&L) | ACDS(Ops) |
| 2nd PUS | AUS(D Staff) |
| DUS(CM) | SECCOS |

CONFIDENTIAL

Some Key Points

1. Whatever the PR or diplomatic penalties, information must not be given which would endanger British forces or reduce their effectiveness. This may mean either complete restrictions (eg on certain force level and technical information) or restrictions for a period of time (eg until the operational situation has changed).
 2. We must invariably tell the truth, correct errors we have made and avoid deliberately misleading the media (even if we sometimes conceal certain points). Credibility is our greatest advantage over the Argentines, who have proved themselves suspect to the media.
 3. We should strive to announce incidents before the Argentines do so. This:
 - a. Immediately gives us the "high ground" in PR terms - and makes Argentine distortions less likely to stick (since they appear a reaction to what we have said, rather than an objective report).
 - b. Reassures opinion at home and abroad that the Government in London is controlling British forces - and is pursuing a controlled and purposeful policy.
- On balance it is better to make a thin announcement early (particularly before the Argentines) than a fuller one later.
4. We must continue to make some initial reports on the record (and live to camera) since this is the best way of ensuring that our statements are repeated accurately worldwide.
 5. We must increase the volume of PR material released - particularly on operations. The coverage we receive is directly proportional to the output we produce. The capacity of the worldwide media organisations will be filled somehow and, if not by us, then by the Argentine or ill-informed lay commentators. Our brief initial reports should be followed up by greater detail and "colour". This may take the form of:
 - a. Reports by correspondents with the Task Force, which have a valuable bonus of implicit independent corroboration.
 - b. Where we cannot give further detail "on-the-record" we must provide background briefings. The UK Defence correspondents have shown they can be trusted with confidences.
 6. We need to increase our coverage in the world's press. Briefings for foreign correspondents in London have an important role to play here, but we must also ensure that FCO posts abroad can play a more active role in explaining events and policy.
 7. MOD PR needs to be set more closely in the diplomatic framework. All our announcements and briefings should show (either directly or implicitly) that military operations are being deliberately undertaken in support of broader Government objectives and, especially, to reach a solution with the minimum use of force.

RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

8. We should not be afraid to announce bad news in the same way as good news. Only if there are genuine security reasons - which there should be - should we conceal losses or delay their announcement. The Argentines will frequently be able to announce them and, if they do so before us, will be able to exaggerate and distort. The Press will respect us for revealing bad news and this will give them greater confidence in reporting our good news. Domestically it is reassuring to the public - and to the families of Servicemen in particular - to be confident that matters are no worse than we say. (Rumour of unannounced losses is particularly depressing to national morale). Internationally, our acceptance of losses is seen as a sign of steadiness and determination.

RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

EB



PUS/82/560
9/31/F

AUS(D Staff)

| | |
|-----------|-----------|
| Copy to: | |
| PS/S of S | DUS(P) |
| CDS | ACDS(Ops) |
| CNS | SECCOS |
| CGS | CPR |
| CAS | DCPR |
| DGI | |

20.5.82

H/C

DUS(P) - 2nd copy DCDS(1)
D HQ by.

FALKLANDS: NEWS RELEASE POLICY

With immediate effect I should like you to establish a News Release Group.

2. The role of the Group will be to decide what current operational information should be made available to the press and to FCO posts for dissemination overseas, and the timing of release. As a group you have full delegated authority from CDS and myself to authorise the release of information (subject of course to the wishes of the Secretary of State). Whenever time permits you should arrange for wider consultation as necessary, eg with Single Service staffs and with the FCO.
3. You will be the Chairman and the other permanent members will be ACDS(Ops) and CPR. The duty PR spokesman will participate in the work of the group substituting for CPR as necessary.
4. The Group is to be available at immediate notice during the Falklands daylight hours from 1100-2100A daily. Outside those times representatives (at Captain RN/Colonel/Group Captain/Principal level or above) should be available at one hour's notice.
5. The News Release Group will report to me.

FRANK COOPER
18 May 1982