

E/R

LOOSE MINUTE

D/DPR/14/26

PS/PUS

FALKLANDS OPERATIONS: MEETING WITH EDITORS 21 MAY

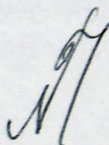
1. It is difficult to anticipate at the moment just what the main thrust of the Editors' interest will be today. Much will depend, I imagine, on what we may have released to the Press in the course of the morning.
2. There are two burning topics which I would have thought the Editors are bound to raise. One concerns the allocation of facilities for ships involved in any raids and the other concerns the continuing annoyance of some correspondents (and their Editors) over alleged - and in some cases real - censorship and delay.
3. PUS will recall that the question of "holding up" copy has been a constant sore throughout the operation.
4. The facts are briefly these: there is no hold up at this end. As soon as copy is received in signal form in the Press Office we photocopy, do a quick check to ensure that there is no obvious security horror, and then immediately 'phone the news desk concerned. Papers are told that copy is available for them from the collecting point outside the South Door entrance. In almost all cases this process takes little more than 10 or 15 minutes. There is undoubted delay in transmission. The average time is between 5 and 6 hours but on occasions - I would think probably rarely - there has been a delay of up to 10 hours.
5. I feel its for PUS to make the point that however hard we try the operational requirements for signal traffic must come first but we know - partly from pressure we have applied and partly because of their own procedures - Commanding Officers have given very high priority to clearing journalists' material.
6. One Commanding Officer, passing on complaints from journalists last night, said that in the last seven weeks he had noted that Editors had been delighted with the copy they were receiving, and sending daily signals from HMS INVINCIBLE "had strained my resources to the limit".
7. Facilities. There have been further complaints, some of them passed to Editors direct, that some correspondents will not be given an opportunity to go ashore with forces on initial landing. There has perhaps been misunderstanding over this. The Unit Commanders on the spot have said that they will not take Press ashore in first landings in a major assault unless they are satisfied that the correspondents have received some degree of familiarization in not only helping to save their own lives but minimising the risk to others. This means that initial selection of correspondents to file pooled copy just has to be left to those on the spot who can best judge the situation.

8. All correspondents who express a wish to go ashore when an assault on the Falklands takes place will be allowed to do so. It just means that some will have to wait until it is safe for them to be taken.

9. Some Press have expressed a wish in any case to stay on board the HERMES, the INVINCIBLE and in a Royal Fleet Auxiliary equipped with MARISAT transmission.

10. We really must leave all of this to those on the spot.

11. I will be very happy to speak on this item myself.



21 May 1982

Neville Taylor
CPR

9BIF PR

E11/1

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EDITORS MEETING: 21 MAY

POINTS ON FACILITIES

1. Transmission of Film and TV Pictures from the Task Force

Over the last fortnight, extensive discussions between BBC/ITV engineers and MOD's technical staffs including RSRE Malvern. British Telecom also involved. Best experts in the country. Results explained in notes, but briefly:

- a. Transmission of still pictures is now available.
- b. TV film looks difficult but putting a ground station on South Georgia/Falklands could improve situation.

2. Customs Clearance for Film

Customs have agreed not to delay entry of film footage returning from South Atlantic; paperwork can catch up later.

3. Photographs of Casualties

It was mentioned that harassment of families of casualties could be prevented by supply of photographs. Unlike Army in NI, Navy mugshots are with units at sea. Instead we will be getting our own Welfare people to ask families for a picture for the Press. Obviously depends on their willingness.

4. Charities

Getting initiatives from charities for support of Servicemen. Suggest co-ordinate centrally through KGFS and Army and RAF Benevolent Funds. (750 lbs of strawberries for SHEFFIELD survivors - 3 lb a head). Proliferation of separate funds increases admin costs and causes confusion. Contact here is DNSC - see note of address left on table.

SECRET

E1)
1112

DS6/242/82

D/DS6/7/48/24/2

SPC/CDS

Copy to:
PS/PUS
AUS(D Staff)

Parham's letter

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RADIO ATLANTICO DEL SUR:
REFERENCE TO THE SAS

1. Following my loose minute to you yesterday we discussed this problem further. We agreed it was important not to give up the "bogey man" image provided by the threat of the SAS. In order to meet this the guidelines should be:

- a. reference may be made to SAS involvement in past operations: attributing them to a source such as "Who Dares Wins"; and
- b. no reference should be made, even quoting from the Media to the use of the SAS in specific operations in the Falklands area (including South Georgia); but
- c. the presence of the SAS in the Task Force may be implied by such devices as "The SAS never tell anyone where they are least of all us poor journalists but they will soon be in amongst you".

You considered that guidelines of this sort would enable the Station to make adequate use of the SAS to meet its remit. For my part I am satisfied that they should cause no irredeemable problems in relation to our general policy on references to the SAS.

[Handwritten Signature]
B MILLER
Head of DS6
MB Ext 7036

21 May 1982

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