

20.7.82

Mrs Beaser - DS11

ES8

SW/82/923

9/31/F

SEVENTH MEETING WITH EDITORS ON FALKLANDS EMERGENCY

PUS held the seventh in his series of meetings with Editors on media coverage of the Falklands emergency at 6.00pm on Wednesday, 16 June. A list of those who attended is attached at Annex A.

2. PUS initiated a discussion about the arrangements for the media following the repossession of the Falkland Islands by HM Forces. Points discussed were:

a. Copy received by MOD through military communications circuits would continue to be pooled, but this practice would naturally phase out as civil communications links to the Falklands were restored.

b. There was no longer any scrutiny or holding up of copy received by MOD, although the local commander might still place some restrictions on the reporting of military detail (eg disposition of air defences round Stanley airfield). In answer to questions, PUS explained that when "cleared" was written on copy this merely indicated that it had been despatched by MOD to media organisations. [In future it will be marked "despatched"]. Delays the previous night over forwarding of PA copy were due only to a breakdown in communications with the Task Force.

c. The press briefing facility in MOD's Concourse Hall would be allowed to run down naturally and would finally be closed once there were insufficient journalists attending to make it worthwhile.

3. Turning to further facilities for correspondents on the Islands, both Ministers and Service authorities were anxious to make arrangements for more journalists, both British and foreign, to report from the Falklands. There were still serious practical difficulties caused by the severe weather conditions, lack of accommodation, pressure on transport facilities within the Islands and shortages of food and water. Commander Land Forces Falkland Islands (CLFFI) had been informed of the general policy and asked to indicate when he could receive more journalists, and a reply was awaited. It was unlikely that MOD would pursue the idea of chartering a ship, which had been mentioned at the last meeting; this would be very expensive - and slow since the only suitable vessel available was currently in the Mediterranean. Instead, MOD had in mind short 1-2 day trips by journalists based on the mainland using light aircraft. This would require the consent of one of the governments concerned (eg Chile or Uruguay) and the FCO were pursuing this currently. [Editors seemed to prefer this to the idea of chartering a ship].

4. Continuing, PUS said that one pressing problem was to retrieve film taken during operations by BBC/ITV which was currently stock-piled at Port Stanley. This would be the first priority for shipment when aircraft could land safely at Stanley airfield. On more detailed points:

- a. Movements of ships with facsimile facilities had temporarily halted the flow of still photographs [this resumed subsequently during the night].
 - b. Editors were keen that when they withdrew a correspondent from the Islands they should have the right to replace him; this was accepted.
 - c. The regional newspapers were anxious to increase their representation; it was agreed that a further 3 or 4 correspondents should be permanently based in the Falklands.
 - d. While MOD hoped to begin Hercules flights to Stanley from Ascension Island soon, there would be many operational/medical demands on a very limited service and it was unlikely that the media could be given sufficient priority to be able to use it in the early days (except for retrieving film and copy from the Falklands).
5. It was agreed that a small group of Editors should continue discussions on the detailed arrangements with DPR(Army).
 6. Towards the end of the meeting, there were some forthright exchanges between PUS and Mr Woon of BBC who alleged that the MOD had diverted certain film taken by BBC cameramen (he mentioned particularly "bomb alley" attacks on shipping in Falkland Sound during the Port Stanley landings, and the operations at Bluff Cove). PUS gave a categorical assurance that there was no deliberate holding back, although the film might well still be in transit by sea to Ascension or awaiting collection at Port Stanley. Sharp points were made about the "public's right to know" and the MOD's responsibilities for not jeopardising the lives of Servicemen.

Comment

7. Generally, the Editors seemed to be in a more relaxed mood than the previous week, though still pressing MOD for improved facilities. It was clear from remarks after the meeting that most of them felt Mr Woon's outburst had been unjustified; it produced a reaction oddly sympathetic to MOD.

S Webb

S WEBB
PS/PUS

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NB. The records of the previous 6 meetings with Editors - not circulated to all - can now be downgraded to unclassified.

SUBJECT: PUS Editors' Meeting
 VENUE: HR27 MOD MB
 DATE: June 16, 1982
 TIME: 1800

ANNEX A

	Newspaper, Agency, etc	Reporters	Photography	Other Details
1	Newspaper Conference	Alex McDonald		
2	Sunday People	Nick Lloyd or Ernie Barrington		
3	Daily Star	Brian Hitchens		
4	Observer	Robin Lustig		
5	Economist	Andrew Knight or Dudley Fishburn		
6	Sunday Times	Frank Giles or Magnus Linklater		
7	NPA	Arthur Gawn		
8	BBC	Alan Protheroe		
9	BBC TV	Peter Woon		
10	Reuters	Graham Stewart		
11	Sun	Kelvin McKenzie or David Shapland		
12	Sunday Telegraph	P. Worsthorne		
13	News of the World	Derek Jameson		
14	Evening Standard	Louis Kirby		
15	BBC External Services	Ken Brazier		
16	Mail On Sunday	Bernard or Anthony Shrimpsley		
17	BBC Radio	Larry Hodgson		
18	BBC News and Current Affairs	John Wilson		
19	Daily Express	Chris Ward		
20	Daily Mail	David Tytler		
21	Daily Mirror	Peter Thompson		
22	Daily Telegraph	Morrison Halcrow		
23	Financial Times	Geoffrey Owen		
24	Guardian	Peter Preston		
25	IRN	Peter Thornton		
26	ITN	John Horabin		

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SUBJECT:

PUS Editors' Meeting

VENUE:

DATE:

TIME:

	Newspaper, Agency, etc	Reporters	Photography	Other Details
1	PA	David Chipp		
2	Sunday Mirror	Cyril Kerst		
3	Newspaper Society	Gordon Page		
4	Sunday Express	Mike Toner		
5	Times	Fred Emery		
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