

DRAFT OD(SA) PAPERSURRENDER OF THE ARGENTINE GARRISON ON THE FALKLANDSINTRODUCTION

1. British ground forces are now well established on East Falkland and the Task Force as a whole has local sea and air superiority. Our ground forces have taken Darwin and Goose Green as well as Teal Inlet and Douglas Settlement. They are now pressing towards Port Stanley where the great majority of Argentine forces are located, as is the Argentine commander, General Menendez.
2. This paper considers the circumstances in which General Menendez should be called upon to surrender; the form such a message should take; how that call might best be transmitted; and what we would need to do about the prisoners resulting from a surrender.

THE CIRCUMSTANCES

3. It is General Menendez who will come under direct military pressure from the Task Force, not the Argentine Junta or General Galtieri, and for this reason it is preferable that a surrender should be proposed directly to General Menendez and not to the Argentine Government. The intransigence of the Argentine Government is already well known and their reaction is likely to be divorced from the reality of the military situation on the Falkland Islands.
4. It is reasonable to expect the commander of the British

forces on the spot to decide the right moment to call for General Menendez' surrender. [It is for consideration whether this should be before or after the reinforcement by 5 Brigade has become known]. A local assessment of the Argentine will to fight will also be an important factor. It is essential, however, that a call to surrender should not be made prematurely. If it comes at a time when the Argentine garrison is not under sufficient pressure to submit it is likely to be rejected out of hand. Once rejected it would be difficult to re-start the process and more fighting than was strictly necessary might be inevitable. There may however be circumstances in which it would be politically advantageous to propose a surrender: if pressure builds up in the UN Security Council for a ceasefire and the UK finds herself totally isolated there, the British case might find wider support if we had evidence (in the shape of a call for surrender) of our efforts to avoid further hostilities. The Force Commander's view would nevertheless have to be sought if a ceasefire call seemed desirable on political grounds.

THE MESSAGE

5. A possible form of words for a message to General Menendez from Rear Admiral Woodward is attached at Annex. It proposes a surrender to British forces to avoid unnecessary and pointless bloodshed, and a meeting at which the conditions would be finalised. These conditions, to be set out in a surrender document, would depend to some extent on local circumstances and would cover the means of notifying outlying troops, the laying down of weapons and equipment and the marshalling of Argentine troops for detention.

The subsequent arrangements for prisoners of war requires urgent study here.

TRANSMISSION OF THE MESSAGE

6. The message would be addressed to General Menendez. There is merit in the message being conveyed privately to him, since we would want to avoid pressure from the Junta. It would not be helpful at the outset to have the message broadcast to the Argentine mainland and the world at large. The best means of getting a message through to General Menendez are not immediately identifiable. It may be possible to telephone, to use the CB radio network, or to use an intermediary, possibly a captured Argentine officer. This is best left to the commander on the spot. Radio Atlantico del Sur is not suitable given that its transmissions will be picked up by Argentina, as will those of the BBC Latin American service.

THE PRISONERS

7. It is clear that as soon as surrender terms have been finalised we shall have a very large number, probably over 10,000, Argentine prisoners of war for whom we will be responsible - especially in respect of their maintenance, medical attention and guarding. Urgent decisions will be required on what to do with them. There are strong reasons for removing them from the Falkland Islands as quickly as possible, not least because of the absence of suitable accommodation. They will have to be moved by ship. Their destination could be a neutral third country (possibly Uruguay), Argentina direct or possibly Ascension Island

(which would have to accommodate a transit camp) if hostilities were not totally at an end. It is possible that we could persuade third countries, eg the US and Brazil, to assist in the removal of these prisoners. Secretary Haig has already informally indicated that US contingency planning for this purpose is in hand. It is also conceivable that Argentina would send transport ships to recover the prisoners direct from the Falklands but that would depend not only on Argentine surrender at Port Stanley but also on a wider cessation of hostilities and on the willingness of the Argentine Government. ICRC involvement would be essential.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8. A call by Rear Admiral Woodward on General Menendez to surrender should be made at the right moment, which may be subject to political direction. The communication should be by the best means available and the form of the message might be as set out at Annex. The question of how to remove the large number of prisoners resulting from a surrender requires further urgent work, since it could impact on the arrangements following a decision by General Menendez to submit.

From the Commander of the British Task Force
To General Menendez, Commanding Argentine Forces in the Falkland
Islands.

Having now established a secure British position and British control over the greater part of the Falkland Islands, with both sea and air command, I suggest that the eventual outcome is inevitable and will be in favour of the British Forces, despite the brave resistance of your men. I therefore recommend that you consider submitting now, with honour, to the greatly superior forces ranged against you and thereby avoid unnecessary bloodshed. Such an action would not lessen the high regard in which the Argentine Armed Forces are held and the reputation which you have maintained throughout the present conflict. If you accept this proposal, I would send a Sea King helicopter to bring you and the Heads of Land, Sea and Air Forces and their Deputies, under conditions of safe conduct, to the Flag Ship to finalize the necessary arrangements consequent upon your decision to submit. I urge you most sincerely to accept my offer in the spirit in which it is intended and thus to avoid further loss of life on your side to no purpose.