

CIVILIAN POPULATION IN PORT STANLEY

1. There are thought to be about 200 Falkland Islanders in Port Stanley. We have been considering whether there is anything further that we can do to ensure their safety during the coming fighting.
2. We have been trying since the beginning of the crisis to arrange for an ICRC presence on the Islands. The Red Cross for their part have been anxious to go and have repeatedly requested the Argentines to co-operate. This co-operation has not yet been forthcoming. There are now two ICRC representatives on the Bahia Paraiso and we and the ICRC very much hope that the Argentines will agree to disembark one of them at Port Stanley soon. We have urged the Argentines, through the Brazilians, to agree to this urgently. It is far from certain that they will do so.
3. If an ICRC representative does reach Port Stanley he will be able to make recommendations to the two sides designed to reduce the risks to the civilians. He could recommend either the creation of a safe area or arrangements for evacuation. Both would be very difficult to implement satisfactorily.
4. The area of operations is so confined that it would be difficult to segregate the civilians entirely from the Argentine military and even more difficult to guarantee that British shells did not accidentally strike the 'safe area'. To gather the civilians in one of the more solid buildings in Stanley, such as the Anglican cathedral or the Catholic church, might only result in a heavier death toll than would otherwise occur.

5. Evacuation would be preferable but would be
 - a. dangerous because of mines on land and perhaps in the harbour; and
 - b. difficult because helicopter lift may be the only practical way of removing the population which would be beyond the resources of the Argentines. In addition, a temporary ceasefire would be necessary in the whole Port Stanley area (again because the area of operations is so confined).

6. The alternative to awaiting recommendations from the Red Cross is for the commander to be charged with negotiating arrangements directly with Menendez.

7. We have concluded with great reluctance that, even with the ICRC on the ground in Port Stanley, it would probably be very difficult to make any special arrangements for the civilians in Port Stanley.