

Ref: B06526



7

Argentina

PRIME MINISTER

c Sir Robert Armstrong

Falklands: OD(SA) on 9th JuneMilitary Issues

1. Your meeting at 10.30 am tomorrow should begin with the normal briefing from the Chief of the Defence Staff.
2. You might then ask the Defence Secretary for an account of the surrender call by the British Land Force Commander which, according to TV and press reports, was made to the Argentine Commander by radio on the night of 7th June. Were the reports correct, and what were the precise terms of the surrender call?
3. The Defence Secretary would like to seek his colleagues' views on the proposal by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office that arrangements should be made for a party of 80 journalists from various countries to visit the Falklands as soon as possible after hostilities on the Islands cease (letter from the private secretary to the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary to the private secretary to the Defence Secretary of 7th June). There is a good deal of pressure from the media behind this idea: American newspapers in particular are indignant that only British journalists have been allowed to accompany the British Task Force, and this feeling is shared by some of the influential West European newspapers. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary should be asked for his view: if we continue to exclude foreign journalists from the Islands once the main battle there is over, we risk alienating the foreign (and especially the United States) media and letting the Argentines win by default the propaganda war about what is going on on the Islands. But the arrangements proposed will make considerable demands on the Force Commander and his staff. Nor will foreign correspondents be <sup>as</sup> amenable as British ones to censorship and control. Among the questions which need to be answered are -



- what priority do Ministers attach to the requirement?
- can the Force Commander and his staff cope with the proposed influx, even assuming that extra press officers are sent out to help?
- what sort of ship would carry the party from Montevideo? (Presumably not a warship, since this would be unacceptable to the Uruguayans.)
- if it is proposed to charter a civilian ship, will one be available?
- should part of the costs be met from public funds? (The Foreign and Commonwealth Office letter suggests that the journey should be "on a repayment basis": but is it realistic to expect to meet the full cost of chartering a ship in this way?)

4. Depending on the discussion, it may be best to defer even a provisional decision until after Port Stanley has been recaptured and we know what the situation is on the ground.

#### Political Issues

5. You may wish to report on your talk with President Reagan, and in particular on any fresh light this may have thrown on the modalities of achieving a comprehensive ceasefire.

6. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary is unlikely to be ready before Friday to put forward the proposals he is preparing about the administration of the Islands after repossession and possible moves towards self-government.

#### Other Issues

7. The Defence Secretary has circulated a note (OD(SA)(82) 63) on burial arrangements for British Servicemen killed in action in the Falklands. The



Sub-Committee was going to return to this subject earlier this week:  
but as public concern about it has begun to subside it is no longer  
urgent and the note does not need to be discussed tomorrow unless time  
permits.

*A D S Goodall*

8th June 1982

A D S GOODALL