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RESTRICTED

SAPU(82) 32

SOUTH ATLANTIC PRESENTATION UNIT (SAPU)

Attached are suggested lines to take on -

1. Civilians in Stanley
2. The Return of the Governor
3. Argentine Prisoners of War
4. Delays in Announcing Casualties in Sir Galahad and Sir Tristram

Also attached is -

5. A transcript of Mr Pym's interview with "News at Ten" on 11 June
6. A transcript of Mr Whitelaw's interview on "The World This Weekend" on 13 June

Cabinet Office

14 June 1982

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1. Civilians in Stanley

An editorial in today's Daily Mirror is highly critical of the Ministry of Defence on the grounds that "only now the battle for Stanley has begun has the Ministry of Defence discovered how many Falklanders are there". This report is both inaccurate and unfair.

A primary consideration in all our planning has been the need to minimise the risk to the Islanders. Since the very beginning of the conflict the International Red Cross have been trying, with our strong support, to establish a presence on the Islands in order to make proper arrangements for the Falklanders' safety. It has inevitably been impossible for us to obtain reliable information on the whereabouts of civilians and it was only when the Argentines finally permitted the Red Cross to land a representative at the end of last week that we discovered that there maybe in fact as many as 600 Islanders still in Stanley. We have agreed unreservedly to the establishment of a neutralised zone in Stanley under the supervision of the Red Cross. We understand that the Argentines have now agreed to this as well and we shall be respecting that zone forthwith.

2. The Return of the Governor

The position remains as stated by the Prime Minister in the House on 27 May - viz no decision has yet been taken. See also Mr Pym's remarks on the subject in the attached transcript.

3. Argentine Prisoners of War

There has been some press criticism that we have been putting our forces at a disadvantage by returning Argentine prisoners of war earlier than required by the Geneva Convention.

The Government has always made it clear that we will carry out all our obligations under the Geneva Convention. Under the Convention, prisoners of war (apart from the seriously wounded) may be detained until hostilities end but must then be repatriated without delay. Nevertheless, the retention in present circumstances of large numbers of prisoners of war would pose a

number of logistical and practical problems. They would have to be guarded, kept supplied with adequate food and clothing, provided with quarters not inferior to those of our own troops and given appropriate medical care - in addition, if they were held for a prolonged period we would have to fulfil a number of other requirements under the Convention. The problems involved could well hamper our forces; and since transferring large numbers of prisoners to Britain would pose equally severe problems, we have been returning Argentine prisoners as soon as reasonably possible - but not until we are sure that they are unlikely to be of further help to the Argentine war effort.

No decision has yet been taken on the timing of repatriation of the large number of prisoners likely to be taken following the capture of Stanley. That decision will be taken in the light of the circumstances at the time which may be rather different to those at present. Clearly we wish to ensure that the repossession of the Islands is followed by an end of all hostilities between Britain and Argentina. Our obligation under the Geneva Convention is to repatriate all prisoners of war at the cessation of hostilities, if not before. That obligation will be honoured.

4. Delays in Announcing Casualties in Sir Tristram and Sir Galahad

As Mr Nott made clear at the weekend, the delay in making public details of casualties at Bluff Cove contributed greatly to achieving the surprise which was a major factor in the success of the attack last Friday night. It was clear that the Argentines had greatly overestimated the casualties and the damage caused by their attacks and as Mr Nott explained, "we wished them to remain uncertain about our strength on the ground and our capability to mount an early attack".

In general, the handling of public announcements on casualty figures presents us with very real difficulties. We have to balance the public's demand to be told the truth as soon as possible with operational/security considerations and, of course, with the need to inform the next of kin of the dead and injured before any names are released. Although a public announcement of the details of casualties at Bluff Cove was held back this did not delay the notification of next of kin.

INTERVIEW GIVEN BY MR PYM TO TREVOR McDONALD 'NEWS AT TEN'  
ON FRIDAY 11 JUNE 1982

FALKLANDS

Diplomatic Activity

Question: Foreign Secretary, you've always made the point, and the Prime Minister's made the point, that the military and diplomatic pressures in Argentina were quite separate and that they were aimed at getting Argentine troops off the Islands. Does it now concern you that the emphasis now appears to be entirely on the military side with apparently no diplomatic avenues open?

Answer: I'm still in touch with the Secretary-General and he would always be available to help if there was any sign of the Argentines changing their mind. After all, we have been negotiating in various ways for over two months and unfortunately we've always come up with the same non-response from the Argentine side. ~~so it's quite true to say that~~ Diplomatic activity at the moment, unfortunately, is minimal but the Secretary-General is there and if a new opportunity came then, of course, advantage could be taken of it. ~~and~~ If only the Argentines would say now that they would withdraw then any further casualties could be stopped and I think everybody would be much relieved about that. But there's no sign of that happening, sad to say.

Question: In the interests of a long term solution, does that lack of diplomatic activity worry you?

Answer: Well, not immediately. We couldn't have tried harder, could we? What other effort could we have made? ~~We've had a number of proposals - three were positively put and turned down. The last one was publicly revealed by us, the last British position, and I think we've done all that we can. and~~ If they're not prepared to withdraw then we're going to have to repossess the Islands, ~~and~~ Then immediately that happens, of course, ~~there will be a lot of diplomatic activity.~~ There will be activity to rehabilitate and restore the Islanders and to help them get on re-establishing their life; but also we will want to re-establish relations with the countries in that hemisphere. It will be ~~very~~ difficult immediately. I don't think we can do anything with the Argentine itself

immediately but our objective will be to try and bring stability back there because in the long run that's crucially important for the Falkland Islanders. So there will be much diplomatic activity at that time.

US Attitude

Question: You told the Americans that we're not quite ready to consider Argentine participation in any long-term future of the Islands at this point. Did the Americans give you any indication about how long they are prepared to wait on our decision upon this?

Answer: Oh, the Americans understand entirely that after what has happened, and after the refusal of all the proposals that we have made and that have been discussed, that it would not be possible for us to contemplate any Argentine involvement on the Islands, at any rate for the time being. Whether, in due course, that will be appropriate remains to be seen, but immediately it isn't practical and the Americans understand that perfectly well.

Question: Would the Americans join Britain in trying to secure the defence of the Islands?

Answer: That is possible. I'm sure it will be a British responsibility in the immediate aftermath of re-possession and perhaps for quite some time, but it's always been my view that it would be in the interests of the Islanders, for their prosperity and their future, if we could establish a broader-based international arrangement involving other countries. I think that might give them greater security and that I shall be trying to achieve. Again, I can't say at this stage with what success or how long it might take. But I see advantage in it from their point of view if other countries agree.

Latin American Co-operation

Question: So we're looking at the Americans and we're looking at other countries in Latin America as well?

Answer: Oh yes indeed. The Americans have an interest, but there are plenty of friendly countries in Latin America who hope that this whole argument can be brought to an end quickly and, once it is, once the Islands are re-possessed, of course, we want to re-establish the best relations that we can. I don't think we ought to under-estimate the difficulties, and I shall be setting about it just as soon as that event has taken place, whether by a sudden miraculous Argentine withdrawal or whether by military means.

Question: When you say that event having taken place, Foreign Secretary, are you talking about the fall of Port Stanley to our forces?

Answer: I'm talking about the re-possession of the Falkland Islands.

British Administration

Question: In the short term are we talking about restoring full British administration to the Islands to the point of having the Governor back on the Islands?

Answer: We are indeed talking about the restoration of British administration, we have taken no decision about the Governor himself and his return. Clearly that is a possibility, but there are other possibilities too. I don't think necessarily we will go back to exactly what existed before. There are other possibilities which we are considering and you can't take a final decision about it until we know the exact circumstances in which the Islands are re-possessed. It may be, miraculously, by a withdrawal. It may be after a very short battle with a surrender of troops. It may be after a much longer battle than people are hoping for and we can't tell. And we've got to wait for that moment before deciding exactly what decisions we ought to take in relation to the administration which we shall put back there once re-possession has been achieved.

No humiliation

Question: Foreign Secretary, you've made it very clear that by their backing, their coming down strongly on Britain's side, and by the assurances you've got after this trip from President Reagan and from the Secretary of State, Mr Haig, that the Americans are still supporting Britain in this. May I put to you what I perceive to be one American concern which is that we don't appear to humiliate the Argentines, or Argentina?

Answer: We've never had a wish to humiliate them. I think they should have withdrawn earlier. All we are interested in is re-possessing British territory which is inhabited by British citizens and humiliation isn't in our mind. And we haven't actually got a real argument with the Argentinian people except insofar as they are responsible for having a government with which we are in very deep dispute and military dispute. But "humiliation" has never been any part of our vocabulary, any more than "unconditional surrender" has been any part of our vocabulary.

It's British soil. Argentine forces ought not to be there and if they won't go voluntarily then they will have to be forced to go.

WILLIAM WHITELAW (HOME SECRETARY)

Transcript from BBC Radio 4, The World This Weekend. 13 June 1982.

PRESENTER: GORDON CLOUGH. ... So now Argentina's increasingly tenuous grip on the Falklands may be measured in hours rather than days, certainly in days rather than weeks. British administration is on the point of being restored. So the problem of what happens next is one which must be playing an even more urgent part in the deliberations of the Inner Cabinet. It was that problem I raised, this morning, with the Deputy Prime Minister, Mr William Whitelaw when I visited him this morning at his official home just outside London. But first Mr Whitelaw paid his tribute to the skill and the bravery of the men of the task force.

WHITELAW: It was obviously a remarkable operation and very, very skilful. Clearly, of course, we have got extremely skilful forces and I think this has become clear throughout the whole operation.

CLOUGH: And, as a Guardsman yourself, I should think you're pretty pleased with the way the Guards have come out of it?

WHITELAW: Well I'm hoping to hear even more, maybe, before long, as to how well they've done.

CLOUGH: But with Stanley, now, within only a few miles - presumably one must be thinking more about the future than about the immediate past - it seems very unlikely, doesn't it, that the Falklands can ever, now, return to the status quo ante - to the position that they were in before the Argentine invasion?

WHITELAW: Well, of course, it has been such an upset, clearly, there'll be a lot of stock-taking; a lot of time to sort things out. The Islanders have had a terrible time; they must be rehabilitated; they must be given encouragement for the future; they must be given a chance to say how they want to see their own future. But they won't be able to do that all at once.



Then there will be the security of the Islands and, clearly, that is going to fall on the British in the first instance. We would like to have other people associated with us if they would do so but, of course, we will have to bear, I believe, the main burden of the day.

CLOUGH: You said that you would like to have other countries involved. Do you think there's a real prospect of a multi-national force or anything of that kind?

WHITELOW: Well I wouldn't be sure of that but we have, obviously, hoped that, in various ways, the Americans would feel they could help us and no doubt they will be very prepared to consider what sort way they could help us and I think we've got to try and see that there is security for the Islands and that does involve more than us. We can provide it in defence terms but I think we'd want to see the Islands fitting in to the whole South Atlantic picture and if that could be done, sensibly, the Islanders do need some basic security which we, alone, would find it difficult to give them.

CLOUGH: Well Lord Shackleton's report, on the economic development of the Islands, has been taken off the shelf and dusted off. Could it be that Lord Shackleton, himself, might play some active role in the future of the Falklands; may be as some sort of interim Governor?

WHITELOW: Well clearly his report is very important. He has agreed to update it. What then happens, of course, is a matter between the Prime Minister and Lord Shackleton and it wouldn't be for me to comment.

CLOUGH: But one of the things that he laid great stress on in that report was the need for Argentine co-operation and that Argentina must have a role in the future of the Falklands. Now the Government (various members of the Government) seem to have said that there is

not, now, nor can there ever be - at least for a very, very long time indeed - any role for Argentina in the Falklands?

WHITELAW: Well, clearly, they have made it as difficult as they possibly can. First of all they invaded (an act of naked aggression) when they had been negotiating with us about the future. Then, when they were told by the United Nations to withdraw their forces, they refused to do so, have still not done so and we have had to repossess the Islands by force. That must, inevitably, change the whole situation. Argentina have really forfeited a great deal of the opportunities they had if they hadn't embarked on this mad scheme of invasion.

CLOUGH: It is said, despite that, that there is American pressure for talks - not tomorrow, not next week, but sometime not too far away - between Britain and the Junta about the future of the Falklands and the role of Argentina in it. Do you think we can ignore Argentina as a possible partner, of some kind, in the future?

WHITELAW : I don't think there has been that American pressure. Of course, before all this; and there was certainly American pressure to stop the Argentines ever invading the Islands in the first place on our behalf and on behalf of the world and that was very helpful. Then Mr Haig went through some very considerable efforts: always frustrated by the Argentines. I think they are anxious, of course, to see the whole of South America return to a sensible situation, naturally, but I don't think there's been any sort of pressure that you mention.

CLOUGH: Mr Whitelaw, the proponents of the conventional navy have seen the Falklands operation as a great vindication of their view that Britain needs a large, conventional surface fleet. The Prime Minister, when she was talking in Bonn, appeared to suggest, I think, that there might be a case for Britain taking on a rather different

role in NATO from the one she, at present, fulfills: increasing the fleet and may be withdrawing troops from BAOR. The Prime Minister didn't, in fact, say that in so many words but that could be an implication in what she said?

WHITELOW: We have, I understand, throughout the situation, fulfilled our military commitment to NATO and we are continuing to do so and I think our NATO allies are very grateful for that and it's important to say it. I've been talking about dust settling in the Falklands. Obviously dust has got to settle on defence policy here as well and I think it would be very unwise for the Home Secretary to start, at this moment of time, straying so far out of his area as to speculate on the exact parts of defence.

CLOUGH: There is an awful lot of dust to settle, actually, when it comes down to it, isn't there. When it comes down to it, there's a bit of dust to settle around the conduct of foreign policy over the last 20 years or so. There's a bit of dust to settle over the way that information has been disseminated or not as the case may be. Do you think we're going to get a whole series of rather dragging on inquiries?

WHITELOW: Well I very much hope not. One of the expressions I've always found valuable in politics is when you've had a great action with great stress and indeed taken, as I believe in the Prime Minister's case, with the most fantastic courage of any Prime Minister for a very long time. After it's all successful, as one prays it will be, then everybody gets their courage back. That's when they all start to quibble at one thing and another. It always happens; it's always the same; and they will. But if I was just to say 2 things. First, I think the criticisms of the

Foreign Office are very unfair. I believe everybody makes mistakes. Perhaps there were mistakes but I have a great admiration for the British Foreign Office and I think it ought to be said. As for the handling of news problems, that is immensely difficult. The primary objective of the Government must be for those men who are fighting on the spot; their interests must be paramount; the saving of their lives must be absolutely paramount and that must take precedence over every other piece of news management, in my judgement. There has been difficulty over the announcement of the casualties and much criticism. But that was felt, by those on the spot, not to give those figures of Bluff Cove would help them in the actions they were taking. I believe it is right for all of us - Ministry of Defence, Government and news media - to realise that that is the first objective.

CLOUGH: In just a moment, Mr Whitelaw, I'm going to be talking to a member of the Falkland Islands Council, Bill Luxton. Now he will have heard the reports from Argentina, as you will, that 2 civilians have been killed. It's an Argentine report, we don't know whether it's true. But there must be great anxiety, in the thoughts of Falkland Islanders who are outside the Falklands now, about the safety of their people who are, at the moment, in whatever numbers, in Port Stanley. Is there anything at all that the Red Cross can do or is being asked to do to make sure that those people are safe?

WHITELAW: Well I think that everything that could be done, from the British Government's point of view, is being done. The Falkland Islanders, of course, have endured great hardships and we would deeply regret if any of them were killed in Port Stanley. But these hardships, let's face it, have been imposed on those Falkland Islanders, from the very word go, by the Argentine.