

The relationship between the military and Argentine correspondents authorized to report from the islands during the Falklands War

La relación entre los militares y los corresponsales argentinos autorizados a informar desde las islas durante la guerra de las Malvinas

A relação entre militares e correspondentes argentinos autorizados a cobrir in loco a Guerra das Malvinas

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ABSTRACT

The Falklands War marks a turning point in war journalism. The islands location at 464 kilometers from the Argentine coast and more than 12,700 kilometers from the British caused the military to exercise information censorship and allow access to a few correspondents. This paper uses a qualitative methodology based on in-depth interviews to Argentine correspondents who covered the conflict to get a new vision through unpublished testimonies. The article concludes that there was a manipulative attempt, although it is clear there was an incoordination between the military controls regarding the censorship criteria.

Keywords: war correspondent, Falklands War, censorship, photojournalism, Rattenbach report.

RESUMEN

La guerra de las Malvinas marca un punto de inflexión en el periodismo de guerra. La localización de las islas a 464 kilómetros de las costas argentinas y a más de 12.700 kilómetros de las británicas hizo que los militares ejercieran la censura informativa y permitieran el acceso a unos pocos corresponsales. El artículo recurre a una metodología cualitativa basada en la entrevista en profundidad a los corresponsales argentinos que cubrieron el conflicto, en las que recoge testimonios inéditos. Se concluye que existió un intento manipulador, aunque queda patente una descoordinación entre los mandos militares con respecto a los criterios censores.

Palabras clave: corresponsales de guerra, guerra de las Malvinas, censura, fotoperiodismo, informe Rattenbach.

RESUMO

A Guerra das Malvinas marcou um ponto de inflexão no jornalismo de guerra. A localização das ilhas, a 464 km da costa da Argentina e a mais de 12.700 quilômetros dos britânicos, permitiram aos militares censurar informações e liberar o acesso a campo para poucos correspondentes. O artigo utiliza uma metodologia qualitativa, baseada em entrevistas em profundidade com os correspondentes argentinos que cobriram o conflito. Concluiu-se que houve tentativa de manipular as informações por parte dos militares, embora a falta de coordenação entre o comando militar evidenciou uma falta de critério em relação aos temas censurados.

Palavras-chave: correspondentes de guerra, Guerra das Malvinas, censura, fotojornalismo, Relatório Rattenbach.

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INTRODUCTION

Military and journalists are two groups that historically have always distrusted each other: the reporters because they do not believe that the information that arrives to them is transparent and the military, because they consider that the press treats the subjects with superficiality and sometimes without knowledge and, therefore, wrongly (Knightley, 2004; Pizarroso, 2005; Pizarroso, González & Sapaq, 2007). This complex relationship was already evident with one of the earliest war correspondents, William Russell, when he covered the Crimean War. His first information was quite critical with the English army. He caused stupor in London when he spoke of the perfect organization of the French against the poor English organization (Braojos, De Pablo & García, 1999). These criticisms were not well accepted by the army, which decided not to recognize the correspondent, whose coverage job became difficult from that moment: he was denied food rations or assistance, and was harassed by the officers (Greenslade, 2013).

This fact shows what the relations between the two groups have subsequently been, namely that the history of armed conflicts, especially since the twentieth century, cannot be understood without analyzing its communicative aspects, considering that no one can deny the relationship between public opinion and a war (Betancur, 2004; Pizarroso, 2008; Ramonet, 1997). And in that framework, the censorship is consubstantial to the war. It can be in the source itself, in the control of the channels used by the reporter or in the media themselves. Hence the relevance of analyzing the case of the Falklands War, because from this conflict, according to Philip Knightley (2001), the theory was developed that if the government confronts the media and tells them they will not authorize them to cover the war, journalists become so desperate that they can even come to a deal: cover the war in exchange for complying with Army rules.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The coup of March 24, 1972 and the 19 statement of the Military Junta –“anyone who by any means disseminates, divulges or propagates news, releases or images for the purpose of disrupting, or discredit the activity of the Armed Forces will be repressed with imprisonment of up to 10 years (Menajovsky, 2011)– influenced the

media when, in January 1982, they started a campaign to recover the Falklands Islands (Pizarroso, 2005). On April 2 of that year, the Argentine press announced the landing of the national troops in the archipelago, and General Mario Benjamin Menéndez was appointed its military governor. That same day, the Secretary of Public Information, Rodolfo Baltiérrez, summoned the directors of the newspapers of national circulation and announced that all the information would be centralized in the Joint Staff (Escudero, 1996). The failed negotiations between Argentina and Great Britain led to a war that had not been foreseen. On April 30, the British fleet reached the South Atlantic, imposing a zone of total exclusion around the islands, which would give way to the bombings that began on May 1 and would end on June 14 with the surrender of Argentina (Kaplan, 1984).

Correspondents from around the world traveled to Argentina at the beginning of the conflict and tried to charter ships to get closer to the war zone, but they had to give up when checking the exorbitant prices demanded by the ship-owners and, especially, when the United Kingdom warned that their forces would open fire on any ship entering the exclusion zone. This allowed the British government to have total control over the information, managing to hide until the end of the war some facts that, if known by the public opinion at that time, would have harmed them; among them, certain attacks suffered by their ships or the breakdown of the *Invincible* ship as soon as they left the port of Portsmouth. The Argentine government also exerted great pressure over the media of its country, with the “Guidelines to be considered for the fulfillment of the Act of the Military Junta providing the control of the information for reasons of security”, in which, among other things, it forbade the subtraction of credibility or contradiction of official information (Burkart, 2013). Hence, the importance of speaking directly with the journalists who were there.

The control of the media impressed the American military and marked its relationship with journalists in successive conflicts. US captain Arthur A. Humphries wrote in the *Naval Academy* magazine in May 1983: “Controlled access to combat, invoking censorship, and providing patriotic support at home and on the battlefield. Both Argentina and Great Britain showed us how to make wisdom prevail” (Shor 1998, p. 69).

An example of this was the operation of the invasion of the Caribbean island of Granada in 1983, which was conducted with total secrecy to avoid leaks to the press and no one could report until the military gave informative access, 48 hours later, when the island was under their control. Many journalists reported that fellow aircraft fired their boats when they tried to reach the island, so they had to stay in the Barbados Islands. Finally, after many pressures, the Americans gave access to fifteen of the seven hundred reporters present, but the elect refused to share their material, so it was called “the uncovered invasion” (Knightley, 2004). The media, therefore, only had the information provided by the US Department of Defense, news that many reporters questioned. Images of the conflict that reached American homes showed young American students running to meet the military. Subsequent opinion polls revealed massive support from the US public for the restrictions imposed on journalists and dramatically elevated President Reagan’s popularity. This time, the operation had obtained the expected result, but the reaction of the press was immediate as they demanded their right to inform. To ease tensions, General Vessey appointed a commission headed by retired General Winant Sidle to study how the relationship between the military and the media should be in the coverage of future armed conflicts. To this end, Sidle worked with the four branches of the Armed Forces and the main journalistic organizations of the United States. In the end, it was unanimously agreed that the American media should “cover US military action to the extent permitted by the nature of the mission and the security of the Armed Forces” (Comisión Sidle, 1984, p.88). On August 23, 1984, eight recommendations were made to create a viable system to ensure the media’s access to the battlefield in future military operations, including the simultaneous planning of both the military and information operations, the creation of a pool and the selection of a group of correspondents preset to gain speed (Comisión Sidle, 1984).

The purpose of the pool was to integrate a small group of selected journalists into military operations,

who then shared their information with the excluded to reconcile a dual objective: to ensure the safety of journalists and to control information. This idea of sharing military news by several newspapers had already emerged in the Franco-Prussian War, but there it did so at the initiative of the newspapers themselves, to maximize the work of the journalists sent to the front (Bordería, Lagura & Martínez, 1998).

This model was first tested in April 1985, but nine more tests were performed to exercise participants, although the first major operation was in December 1989 with the invasion of Panama in the so-called “Operation Just Cause.” Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney decided to use the pool model but only two hours before the start of the operation, so coverage was delayed. Reporters embarked seven hours later than the military and then spent four hours at a US military base at Howard, where they reported the first two days. The rest of the journalists who traveled waiting to be included in the pool were forced to return home, as they were not given access to the battlefield. The coverage of the operation was in line with expectations and no images of fallen US soldiers circulated. American public opinion gradually regained confidence in its military. The “Just Cause” operation was one of the greatest examples of control over press correspondents, since the military was not only able to review the information, but managed to put the press on its side, as in the past. The method launched by the army in the American invasions of Granada and Panama was consolidated in the Gulf War. US and British military worked together to allow only a limited number of journalists to enter the battlefield (Lavin & Römer, 2015).

Specifically, the relationship between the correspondents and the military during the Falklands War marks a turning point in future conflict coverage. For this reason, it is essential to know the testimonies of the Argentine reporters who were in the islands, to really know what that relationship was like and, therefore, to verify the role of censorship of the Argentine military in this conflict.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Before developing the research methodology, it is necessary to establish its objectives:

- O1 The first objective is to analyze the relationship between reporters and the military to demonstrate the difficulties encountered by journalists present in the Falklands to inform.
- O2 The second objective is to see if these military interferences were well planned and organized or if this information control was disorganized.
- O3 Another objective raised in the investigation is to compare the official version of the Argentine army regarding what happened with the journalists with their testimony.

In general, we intend to provide a new vision of the Falklands War through unpublished testimonies of the information professionals who lived the conflict from the trenches.

METHODOLOGY

In order to achieve the stated objectives, the qualitative method and, in particular, the in-depth interview

will be used to understand the relationship between the Argentine military and correspondents (O1, O2). It is important to note that in Argentina, only “a professional journalist who has taken a year and a half course in the Army, Navy or Air Force and who has approved it is considered a war correspondent. This gives you permission to attend [war] operations in any war scenario involving Argentina. But it also gives you obligations, like the use of uniform, military degree and absolute subjection to the hierarchy” (Pérez Andrade, 2015). Of all the professionals who covered the conflict, only Eduardo Rotondo had that category. In this paper we will refer to all of them as ‘correspondents’, considering the meaning of the Spanish Royal Academy (2015), which defines it as “the person who habitually and on the orders of a newspaper, a television station, etc., sends current affairs news from another settlement or foreign country”.

The interviews were semi-structured and face-to-face in Buenos Aires, except for two that had to be done by telephone, because the professionals were in other Argentinean locations. They were conducted in April and May 2015 during a research stay, but the search for contacts began two months earlier. The duration of each meeting was approximately two hours. In addition, Nicolás Kasanzew provided a copy of his book *Malvinas a sangre y fuego* [Malvinas with blood and fire], already

Name	Profession	Name of the media	Type of media
Rafael Wollmann	Photographer	ILA	Agency
Nicolás Kasanzew	Journalist	ATC	Television
Marcos Novo	Camera assistant	ATC	Television
Diego Pérez Andrade	Journalist	Télam	Agency
Juan José Marc	Journalist	Télam	Agency
Román Von Eiksten	Photographer	Télam	Agency
Eduardo Farré	Photographer	Télam	Agency
Juan Carlos González	Radio-communication technician	Télam	Agency
Rodolfo Schroh	Radio-communication technician	Télam	Agency
Eduardo Rotondo	Cameraman/photographer	BAI Press	Agency

Table 1: Professionals who were in the Falklands interviewed

Source: Own elaboration.

discontinued, in which he narrates his experience in the conflict and that will be cited throughout the work.

After conducting the in-depth interviews, the article was structured in a chronological manner, in order to highlight more clearly the changes in the relationship between the military and the correspondents, depending on each stage of analysis.

Regarding objective 3, the final report prepared by the South Atlantic Conflict Analysis and Assessment Commission (Informe Rattenbach, 1982) has been analyzed. The report was commissioned after the war, under the government of Reynaldo Bignone, and declassified in 2012 by the government of Cristina Fernández de Kirchner. Thus, the official version of the relationship with the correspondents by the military branch during the Falklands conflict can be compared with the testimony of the interviewees.

RESULTS

THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE MILITARY WITH CORRESPONDENTS

The professionals who covered the conflict from the archipelago were relatively few. The most numerous belonged to the news agency Télam: nine professionals (journalists, photographers and technicians), who were informing from the invasion until the surrender. For its part, the television network ATC (Argentina Televisora Color), also public, sent three professionals (a journalist, a camera operator and a camera assistant). In addition, the agency BAI Press sent the cameraman Eduardo Rotondo. But the correspondents themselves say that if other Argentine professionals had wanted to stay on the islands, they would not have had problems doing so. Nicolás Kasanzew, a journalist with the ATC network, and Eduardo Rotondo, a cameraman and photographer of the BAI Press agency, witnessed how General Menéndez offered reporters to stay, although in the end they preferred to return to Comodoro Rivadavia (Kasanzew, 2015; Rotondo, 2015).

The foreign correspondents had greater limitations and had to report covering the conflict from the Sheraton hotel in Comodoro Rivadavia. Argentine photographers could travel all over Patagonia, but foreigners

were not allowed to pass through Rio Negro. In this situation, foreign media attempted to buy the photographs from Argentine reporters or from the military who illegally sold the ones from the reporters on the islands (Wollmann, 2015).

The relationship between the military and the press was not the same from the beginning of the invasion to the end of the war, nor was it between the different ranks of the Armed Forces (hence the need to present the results in chronological order).

During the Argentinean invasion (2 and 3 of April of 1982)

In this phase highlights the role of journalists present in the area before the arrival of the correspondents authorized by Argentina and that faced the first attempts of control and manipulation. Rafael Wollmann, a photojournalist for ILA (Imagen Latinoamericana) agency, along with British correspondents Simon Winchester (of The Sunday Times) and Ian Mather with his photographer Tony Prime of The Observer were the only reporters on the islands when the occupation occurred. Wollman arrived earlier (March 23) in order to make a report for the Gamma agency on the islands, while the British came to report on the South Georgia incident.

According to Wollmann, on the afternoon of April 1, Governor Sir Rex Hunt radioed the entire population to remain indoors, because the Argentine invasion was to take place and the Marines were ordered to shoot to kill. Wollmann received an intimidating shot at the window of his lodge while photographing the Argentinean Vice-chancellor Hector Gilbert heading for the governor's house. After the surrender, he left to photograph what was happening and captured some snapshots that would go around the world. He acknowledges that it was a tense moment, because the British had their hands raised although they were still armed and, at any moment, a confrontation could occur (Wollmann, 2015).

Wollmann was the only professional able to move freely around the islands until the afternoon of 3 April, when a plane loaded with special correspondents arrived. According to him (Wollmann, 2015), the Argentine

military was confused as to who he was and why he was there, but since there was no one from the press and he was an Argentine, he went unnoticed. He remembers that when high level militaries saw him they would said “we have to talk”, but in the end he was able to do his job with complete freedom. However, he says, after the Georgian incident there was more control over what was coming out of the archipelago. For example, on the April 30th flight he sent with the pilot the photographic material he had until then to deliver it to the agency, but the man finally delivered it to the Armed Forces. The camera rolls were kidnapped and the Air Force revealed and revised the material; however, they returned it to the agency after not finding any suspicious. For this reason, Wollmann did not hesitate to return to the country in the flight of April 3, the first after the occupation, with the material of the invasion. In order to more easily circumvent military control, he took virgin camera rolls and cut them as he did with the exposed ones, and put them in his bag while passing the reels to another comrade. The photographs by Rafael Wollmann illustrated the covers of almost all the media, being the only ones that existed. Their impact, with the British soldiers lying on the ground or with arms raised, generated a rumor that the author himself never believed, that states that at that moment some voices said that Margaret Thatcher had commanded the fleet after seeing his graphic documents.

Eduardo Rotondo (2015), of United States' ABC, tells another anecdote that demonstrates the power of the image, but this time of video. He was in Rio Gallegos trying to cross for the third time to the islands before the war began, and the Argentine military asked him a favor in exchange for helping him travel in one of their planes: to record some tanks before arriving at the islands, because there they sank through the marshy soil. When he arrived at the place of the conflict, he continued filming and he forgot the recording of those images, that finally were broadcasted in the United States as if they had been shot in the islands. According to the cameraman, an English soldier told him twenty years later that they had carried heavy tanks into the area and that they were all stuck, as the British were probably confused with the dissemination of the images (Rotondo, 2015). Therefore, and in relation to the first two objectives of the investigation (O1 and O2), already in this phase prior to the Argentine occupation an initial control of the communications that left the archipelago is observed, although in a rather

improvised way, because the Military were not counting on the presence of an Argentine journalist in the area.

During the Argentinean occupation (from April 3 to May 1, 1982)

At this stage occurred the planned arrival of the first correspondents sent after Argentinean authorization. Thus, the military chartered the day after the invasion, on April 3, a plane so that about 40 reporters could portray the Argentinean occupation on the islands. That day, the military did not exercise censorship, although reporters who came in the afternoon could only take positive photographs because, according to Wollmann (2015), the prisoners were gone and there were no traces of the invasion, the amphibious tanks were gone and the soldiers were with their faces washed. Most of the correspondents returned to Comodoro Rivadavia, but on that day the first correspondents of the news agency Télam, the journalist Juan José Marc, the photographer Roman von Eiksten and the assistant technician Alfredo Arcuri settled down; they were joined after by the communications technician Rodolfo Schroh (Marc, 2015). When they arrived, the military took them in an off-road vehicle from the airport to the auditorium where General García, the operations commander, was located. When Juan José Marc (2015) presented the safe passage to the military, the commander told him: “I do not know if you know much about military structures; this for me is an order, you are authorized, but do not ask for anything else.” General García also asked him if he was going to wear military clothing and when he said no, he warned him “that he could be considered a *kelper* or resident of the island. In addition to receiving neither food nor lodging” (Marc, 2015).

During those first days, the reporters only found logistical problems: they did not have a means of transport to move by the islands, depended on the military and their communication systems failed. But, according to Marc (2015), at that time his media did not give much value to what happened there, since of the 470 chronicles that he sent only 14 were published, something of which he was not aware until he returned. Eduardo Farré (2015), photographer of the agency that would arrive on April 20, recalls that there was not much activity at the beginning and that his job was to portray the soldiers doing some works. They were free to move and sometimes they were taken to certain places that the military wanted them to film.

When negotiations with the Peruvian government – which had requested a 72-hour truce for the two countries to reach a peaceful solution, according to Roman von Eiksten (2015)– failed, the first thing they surmised was that the British would bomb the airport, so they requested permission to record the press officer of the Military Government, captain Fernando Orlando Rodríguez Mayo, there but they denied it.

Therefore, at this stage of the investigation, we initially observe that the army's intentionality of censorship with the arrival of journalists was planned and that it could follow an orderly strategy aligned with the interests of the military: they arrived chartered on a military aircraft, to a place where only "positive" stories could be reflected and with limited transportation wherever the military was. However, the beginning of the war would stress the relations between military and correspondents, changing this situation.

During the Falklands War (1 May to 14 June 1982)

During the war, tensions between correspondents and the military intensified and the disparity of censorship criteria between the military itself and between the Malvinas and Buenos Aires became evident. The first bombing occurred on May 1 and with it also came the first serious incident of the military with the press. Diego Pérez Andrade, despite not having the authorization to cover the attack, went with the two photographers of his agency Télam to the airport to report the damages. They walked down the landing track, saw that it was not as badly damaged and, as the journalist recalls, they sent an informative dispatch in which they said the landing track was operational. The next day they congratulated him for his work, but in the afternoon they announced that he was being expelled from the island. However, finally, the governor changed his mind because he assumed that responsibility had not been his. After the bombings, hundreds of military men with machines crafted fake craters with earth, so that the British thought that they had damaged it and so did not continue to bombard it. But the lack of coordination between commanders and the absence of clear orders made the control of the information fail and the governor stated that in the Falklands they fought one war and in Buenos Aires, another (Pérez Andrade, 2015). Eduardo Farré (2015), the author of the track photography, supports this lack of control between the island's intelligence team and Buenos Aires. Juan José

Marc, who had already returned from the Falklands and was working as editor of International Information, lived this incident from the newsroom of the Télam agency. He explained that they had a "censor" commissioner, but they had been ordered to publish everything that came from the Falklands because it had already been censored from there (Marc, 2015). However, it was proved that the information control system from the islands had not functioned. In this context, the transmission equipments were withdrawn from the Télam agency for a few days. According to Juan Carlos González (2015), the commander-in-chief in Buenos Aires asked General Mario Benjamín Menéndez, military governor of the Falklands, for explanations of the information transmitted from the agency and ordered to remove the equipment until further notice. Anyway, that did not stop them from continuing to work, since they transmitted from the office of Cables & Wireless, where the signal was also encrypted.

Captain Rodríguez Mayo acted as censor of the reporters assigned to the Falklands and generally accompanied the teams when they did some activity. Nevertheless, he took them to places without informative value and made difficult to cover the war with freedom of movement. Some, like Kasanzew (2015), have the theory that sometimes they used them to show situations or resources that suited them.

Rodolfo Schroh (2015), technician of the Télam agency, says that Captain Rodríguez Mayo was the one who filtered the information. Juan Carlos González (2015), a radio technician from Télam, says that it was this captain who supervised the radio signal sent to the agency, as well as the texts. If there were things he did not want to be transmitted, he crossed out the paragraph. With television he worked in a similar way. According to Kasanzew (2015), if the captain accompanied them on the recording, he would tell them what they could show, but when he did not go with them, he would check the images through the viewfinder, complementing the image with a headset, and telling them what to delete every night. On the other hand, Rotondo (2015) explains that when he made them erase the images that he did not authorize, the tape lost the synchronism, reason why the images that came later were annulled. For example, of a recording of twenty minutes, they ended up losing five for each minute censored, something that generated many clashes between correspondents and military. But Captain

Rodríguez Mayo, in addition to censoring the material, was in charge of managing the authorizations for the front. In fact, according to Pérez Andrade (2015), as they were generally denied permission, they began to avoid him and go with the Navy's commander-in-chief, Jorge Isaac Anaya, who was more flexible. Kasanzew collects in his book the different phases of censorship through which his television material was passing: there was a first censorship in Puerto Argentino, then in Comodoro Rivadavia the Air Force censored him and, finally, in Buenos Aires the work relied on the Army Intelligence censors.

The May 1 incident caused control to intensify after the start of the war and the military eventually kidnapped the radio from the Télam agency, although they were able to continue broadcasting from the Cables & Wireless office where censorship depended on the Air Force. Juan Carlos Gonzalez (2015) adds that his equipment was amateur radio and his broadcasts were open, so anyone could listen to the information they transmitted. Therefore, when the equipment was returned, reporters from Télam claim that they worked with more restraint so that they would not be taken back. This situation could also affect ATC professionals, whose equipment, according to Marcos Novo (television camera assistant), were almost impounded (Novo, 2015). From this incident there was an iron control of the press. The correspondents themselves requested guidelines so that they could work more freely and that their material was not eliminated, and all they were told was that they could not communicate placements or data on regiments or numbers of soldiers. From that moment they did not have so many problems, according to Rotondo (2015). But reporters such as Kasanzew (2015) or Pérez Andrade (2015) recall that there were really no valid criteria, which often prevented the transmission of information by precaution, but others ended up censoring absurd things, due to improvisation and the absence of clear and established rules.

The process followed by the photographs was different: when they could not transmit them by radio (most of the time), the camera rolls or reels were sent through the Hercules planes, which eluded the blockade, to be revealed in Buenos Aires. From there, they passed through a control of the intelligence units and the authorized ones were returned to the agency (Farré, 2015). Juan José Marc (2015) attests that images that had not passed through the General Staff of the Army

or the Joint Chiefs of Staff could not be directly sent to the agency. And he explains that the texts that were sent to the agency did not go through this process and that he does not remember the figure of any censor in the agency: first, because Jorge Manuel Iglesias (news director of the agency) was a man of trust of the Navy; and secondly, because the Armed Forces could hardly censor the press because they were not trained to evaluate journalistic material (except in the case of an intelligence officer). In the end, the reporters eluded the censorship or played with the lack of control between the different members of the Armed Forces; and some—like the ATC television crew—who were not allowed to move freely, found a solution: going to the airport every day, which was not under Army jurisdiction, but rather of the Air Force, which was a lot more flexible. In addition, they found action there, because it used to be bombarded up to three or four times each day (Kasanzew, 2015; Pérez Andrade, 2015).

Eduardo Rotondo (2015), a correspondent who did photographs for *Gente* magazine and recorded on video for the ABC network, recalls that his material was sent directly to the United States as soon as he arrived in Argentina, without going through any other censor. However, the ATC public channel for which Kasanzew worked was the channel that was responsible for telling the Argentines the war, and that content was the one that later, once broadcasted, was distributed by the foreign televisions, which made possible a greater control over its contents. Rotondo points out that he could show what was really happening, even if that material was not seen in Argentina. He also acknowledges regretting the use given to his photographic material, although the reality is that almost no information came from what was published or broadcasted outside the islands. In general, reporters remember that with the low-ranking military they had no problem, since they, the reporters, were the ones who could buy supplies in the only store there was. They also remember that soldiers often rejoiced in the presence of the correspondents, because their families could see them: in many ends of recording appeared military greeting to the camera.

The good relationship of journalists with the military was also essential when moving around the islands, since they depended on them (Pérez Andrade, 2015). According to Rotondo (2015), the most fortunate in that regard were the correspondents of the ATC public

television network. Instead, he had to travel many places on foot, except for the last three days, when the war had already moved to Puerto Argentino and he did not have that difficulty. Reporters of the Télam agency also did not find great difficulties, thanks to the good relations with some regiments, like the 25 of Infantry. According to Pérez Andrade (2015), contact was also fluid with the military that were not related to Governor Menéndez. The invasion of the Falklands had put Argentina in the spotlight, so the Argentine military had very clear guidelines of having no conflict with the *helpers*. They had to be very permissive with them, which caused them discomfort and led many to skip the rules and transfer or give information to journalists.

On the other hand, the military decided to create their own media to inform the Armed Forces, and on May 7, by order of the Joint Military Commander, Brigadier General Mario Benjamín Menéndez, the *Gaceta Argentina* was created. It was a newspaper that had chaplain Fray Salvador Santore as director and as deputy director, captain Fernando Orlando Rodríguez Mayo. The first issue was published and published in Puerto Argentino on May 8, 1982, and its purpose was to “inform the truth, which comes from the real and gives a new historical and social sense to these Falklands lands. The falseness in the information creates absurd or imaginary illusions; on the contrary, the clean information mission, shows horizontals and maintains in us the virile warning of the just and noble struggle that we have undertaken and must not cease” (*La Gaceta Argentina*, 1982). Its last issue, number 11, was published on June 7, Journalist’s Day, and made a reference to reporters who were in the Falklands.

Almost at the end of the conflict, when the British were already making progress, according to Pérez Andrade (2012), their work became more difficult not only when covering the information, but also transmitting it: “The British blockage had reached the radio-communications. You could only talk by microwave with the mainland at the times when the fleet let us. There was no chance of telegraphing”. Finally, Argentina surrendered on June 14, 1982 and, among other things, some of the photojournalists found that many of the reels they sent to the Hercules had been stolen by the military and sold to the foreign media that were in the Sheraton hotel. According to Eduardo Farré and Román von Eiksten, photographers of the Télam agency, others did business with their work, because

foreign media paid up to a thousand dollars per reel, since there was no material from the Falklands. Juan José Marc claims to have discovered that snapshots he made with his personal camera were sold for \$40,000 to Stern magazine.

In the light of the foregoing, after interviewing the reporters who were on the islands covering the conflict, we observe continuous censorship attempts, although with a great lack of control and lack of clear orders, which generated confusion among the professionals themselves.

ANALYSIS OF THE MILITARY POST-CONFLICT: THE RATTENBACH REPORT

Related to the third objective of the investigation (O3), it is noteworthy to analyze whether the testimony of the war correspondents coincides with the Rattenbach report. After the war, during the military government of Reynaldo Bignone, the South Atlantic Conflict Analysis and Assessment Commission (better known as the Rattenbach report) was created through a secret decree of December 2, 1982, to advise the Military Junta to establish responsibilities and sanctions between military and civilians. The Commission was composed of six generals, two of each of the three Armed Forces. On the part of the Army, the two members were Lieutenant General Benjamin Rattenbach, the most veteran, and Major General Tomás Sánchez de Bustamante. On September 16, 1983, the Commission presented the results of the investigation: 17 volumes, 15 chapters and 890 numbered paragraphs, which analyzed in detail the conflict and the actions of the commanders during the war. Only 13 copies were printed, which were distributed between the high command of the Military Junta and the members of the Commission, but at the end of November of the same year the magazine *Siete Días* published half of the research (*El Historiador*, 2015). According to Rosendo Fraga (2012), it was Sánchez de Bustamante who leaked to the press the text of the report, not the annexes, with the intention of contributing to the solidity of future democracy and changing the population’s perception of the Armed Forces. However, it would not be until February 7, 2012 when President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner signed the decree declassifying the Rattenbach Report (Casa Rosada, 2015).

In the chapter “The action of our own forces” it is gathered that the censorship had a great influence and

that it was exerted by both countries during and after the conflict. It concludes that there were several errors, ensuring that there was no “adequate organization for the direction, intelligence, planning execution and evaluation of it” (Informe Rattenbach 1982, p.23). It is acknowledged that there were no “national definitions about the wide and complex issues of Social Communication and Psychological Action” and that the Ministry of Public Information was not properly exploited because, despite not having an ideal organization and equipment, it could have been better adapted to the situation. The Joint General Staff was the one who, once the conflict began, took responsibility in this matter, without having experience and with a basic organization. Thus, it was improvised and everything was subject to the criterion of the commanders, with their errors and successes, not having a pre-established plan (Informe Rattenbach, 1982). In addition, there was a lack of coordination among the responsible agencies.

Among the main errors, the report admits that there was no adequate organization to efficiently implement “the National Social Communication System” and “the absence of a sufficient number of military specialists in this complex field of support” (Informe Rattenbach, 1982, p.223). In point 4, it also concludes that the available resources were not adequately exploited and in 5, it criticizes the “inefficient control of information, which provided valuable data for the enemy”. It is also criticized to have been too permissive with the treatment of information during the war, to accommodate triumphalist effects. The report recognizes that there was a lack of adaptation to the new guidelines, which caused that the psychological action was outdated and negative, especially in the final phase of the war.

The conclusions also include a classification and assessment of the psychological action (understood as censorship and control of information) during several phases. The management phase began once the islands were occupied. The phases of intelligence and approach were not executed previously, by the secret imposed. The execution phase, despite the enthusiasm and dedication, suffered from a lack of knowledge, in addition to not having coordination in the use of the media, having produced a poor control, an affirmation that agrees with the opinions of the correspondents interviewed in this article. The classification of psychological action during this war ends with the evaluation phase, which is criticized for not having fully developed “still the way to gain experience for further effective work” (Informe Rattenbach, 1982, p. 224). And it is stated

that the Commission considers that it is necessary to investigate irregularities, as they may give rise to legal proceedings. Among the responsibilities attributed to the Joint Chief of Staff, it is considered that, in matters of psychological action, he is responsible for:

Not to require nor to take the necessary measures to use in an organized way how many suitable media existed in the country, for the better attainment of the objectives of the psychological action. To exercise due control over some social and journalistic media to avoid the dissemination of exaggerated news and other news that affected national security, by the nature of its information. To control adequately the activity of British journalism in Argentina, which had, instead, ample facilities for the use of the media. (Informe Rattenbach, 1982, pp. 261-262)

In addition, the report emphasizes that measures to investigate trade in information during the conflict were not exhausted. General Menéndez, governor of the Islands, is made responsible of all this, for creating a false image of military fortitude against his superiors, which had influence not only in the negotiations, but also “in the psychological action exerted towards the internal public” (Informe Rattenbach, 1982, p.269).

CONCLUSIONS

After the freedom that reporters in the Vietnam War had, the Argentine government tried not to repeat the mistakes made by the Americans, as authors such as Pizarroso (2005) put it. Hence, the information coverage of the conflict was characterized by the absolute control of the information and by the scarce presence of correspondents in the front. With regard to OI – to analyze the relationship between journalists and the military– we have observed in the results that the objective work of the journalists was hampered by an iron control of all their communications. One of the testimonies (Marc, 2015) even speaks of the role of the “censor commissioner” and that correspondents must learn to coexist with both textual and audiovisual control of everything they capture. We have seen in a chronological way that the relationship between the military and the journalists was not always the same and that it evolved according to the context, to the point that the Army created its own media in the last stage of the conflict. In this way, we can conclude that the information control censor of the Argentine Army existed throughout the war process, with two intentions: a) to manipulate the perception of the British

on the effects of their offensives, and b) to control all the information that arrived at the public opinion in Argentina. Regarding this last point, it is noteworthy that there were images that arrived in the Argentine country and were not broadcast for reasons of censorship, but were broadcast in the United States (Rotondo, 2015).

And here we come to the conclusions related to O2 –to see if the military interferences were well planned and organized–, referring to inconsistencies detected in the strategy of information control by the military, who created in the last stage of the war a media controlled by themselves. The military interferences were not well planned and organized and information control was disorganized. In this sense, the Argentine military government did not have a plan of communication established nor studied. The orders were random and even contradictory between the different branches of the Armed Forces, often coming to depend on the responsible military at that time. These personal decisions generated more confusion among the professionals themselves. In fact, it is clear that the more rank the soldier had, the more fear and more censorship existed towards the correspondents. In this sense, since there were no clear guidelines (the only one to be remembered was not to give information that violated the security of the troops), the correspondents themselves used the chaos generated in their own benefit to go to the more permissive military, and thereby achieving greater access to information. Therefore, depending on the hierarchy and the place of the front, there were different policies regarding information censorship.

As for O3 –comparing the official version of the Argentine army with that of the journalists– in contrasting the reality embodied by the correspondents with the Rattenbach Report, we conclude that the version of the former is supported, since the study shows that the censorship exercised was due more to individual and random actions than to a planning studied and orchestrated from the Military Board. But the control organs not only failed in the front; there was also a lack of control over the censorship that was applied to the media in Buenos Aires, since valuable information that the Argentine government would have preferred to silence was disseminated. In this sense, the interest of the military to control the image, the visual aspect, photographs and videos, is remarkable

This could demonstrate the importance of audiovisual versus textual content, perhaps because of its impact capacity, which could be an open line of research for future studies. Nonetheless, it is clear from the results that it is possible that the scarce training of some military personnel is the cause of the control of the image over the text. In this sense, it is observed, through the in-depth interview with Rontodo (2015), how the British could have made the decision to send tanks to a swampy area, due to the images captured by him. The same thing happens with the airport, that needed to be photographed shredded to avoid new attacks. That is, the media and audiovisual content directly influence military decisions. Hence the importance that the military gives to its relationship with reporters from this conflict.

It is noteworthy that the information control in the two countries involved was not the same, according to the testimony of the study. For example, in the Argentine case, the correspondents who were in the islands assure that the coverage from there to other Argentine journalists was not forbidden, but quite the opposite. In fact, it was the other comrades who rejected the possibility of telling the facts from the front. In the British case, the Ministry of Defense explained to the media that Royal Navy vessels could only transport a limited number of correspondents and six were selected first, which, after the complaints, was extended to seventeen. In addition, the British correspondents were forced to sign a document through which they accepted the censorship of their chronicles before sending them.

As a final conclusion, we can affirm that the Argentine censorship in the conflict of the Falklands Islands was a more casual act than something studied and analyzed previously. In this case, the military should not consider as a good example of information control what happened in this war, in the face of future conflicts. With such an affirmation, as information professionals we are not defending the need for an accurate manipulative manual for journalists or correspondents, but that authorities can take this conflict into consideration to learn from mistakes in their propaganda interests. Likewise, the purpose of this article is to show the difficulties faced by any communication professional in the task of reporting in a contest through an audiovisual or textual record.

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