

C O N F I D E N T I A L

Mr MacKenzie
Mr Heathcote o/r
NA/DA
Hof C
HMA

PH/13
Mr Raim
Mr Clark
Mr Smith
Mr Hicks was able to clear up some outstanding business (including outstanding YPF/STW bills & an unpaid Argentine bill) but will comment on this later in this.

DUTY VISIT TO THE FALKLANDS 9 - 17 March 1982

1. I paid a duty visit to the Falklands from 9 - 17 March. A summary of the main official calls which I made during the course of my visit is attached but the following are some notes on various points of interest that arose. *cen 2/1*

General

2. This was a particularly interesting time to visit Port Stanley, coming as it (co-incidentally) did so soon after the New York talks and the current spasm of Argentine sabre rattling. I had the opportunity to make individual calls on most of the Councillors (with the exception of Mr Tony Blake and Mr Ron Binnie, both of whom were canvassing their constituents' views in camp). I was able to have a short discussion with Councillor John Cheek (who departed for a training course in the UK the day after my arrival) and spent a weekend with Councillor Tim Blake and his wife at Hill Cove (where we were joined for one evening by Councillor Bill Luxton). Councillors Blake and Cheek appeared to have borne up well since their return from New York, but both were understandably anxious about the present situation and frustrated that they could not be more forthcoming at the moment with their constituents. Generally speaking, there was an air of anxiety, which has been created not least by the wide circulation of news about the unilateral Argentine statements following the New York talks and summaries of what the Argentine press (eg La Prensa) had been saying. I gathered that there was now a large audience, especially in Port Stanley, for the English language broadcasts by Argentine radio: these programmes, although not specifically directed at the Falkland Islands, always included a section on "what the papers say" and much of the Islanders' information appeared to be derived from this source.

3. With the exception of Councillors Tony Blake and Ron Binnie, who were ~~located~~ *located* on a ~~platform~~ *platform* of no sovereignty talks with Argentina, most Councillors appear to be in favour of talks continuing. Several however expressed some resentment that they had been engineered into this position and others - eg Mrs Mary Jennings - felt that it was unfair for Falkland Islanders themselves to have to take this sort of decision.

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/None

None ventured to predict the likely outcome ~~of~~ continued negotiations but all remained firmly opposed to any idea of ceding sovereignty to Argentina whatever the conditions attached.

150th Anniversary Celebrations

4. Plans for the celebration of the 150th Anniversary of the founding of the colony are already underway. A "logo" has already been designed and is on display in the Secretariat. I understand that a variety of local activities will take place, but the two aspects which are most likely to attract Argentine attention will be the issue of a series of commemorative stamps and - possibly - the attendance either at the celebrations or during the course of 1983 of an appropriate British VIP (they are still hoping that a junior member of the Royal Family may be able to attend). I have asked Mr Growcott to keep us up-to-date on local plans, since there will almost certainly be increasing Argentine interest in them.

Argentine Over-flights

5. Overflights by Argentine military aircraft were a frequent topic of conversation. The emergency landing of an Argentine ~~air-~~
~~craft~~ C-130 at Stanley Airport on 7 March had ~~incidentally~~ given people the jitters. (As Port Stanley reported by telegram, the plane arrived without formal warning and it was only thanks to a local ham radio operator that anyone knew it was coming in. The control tower was not manned since it was a Sunday, and the plane could presumably have landed before anyone could have got out to the airport. As it was there was still time for the Airport Manager, Mr Gerald Cheek, and a contingent of armed marines, to drive out to the airport before the plane landed). The incident certainly demonstrated the relative ease with which unannounced military aircraft could land at Stanley - and also, incidentally, how an incident such as this could be used as an effective diversion if simultaneous military action were planned elsewhere.

6. Mr Cheek (brother of Councillor John Cheek) told me that there seemed to be an increasing number of regular overflights by C-130s at a high altitude, and he surmised that the Argentine Air Force was now deliberately routing its flights between Buenos Aires and the Marambio base in the Antarctic over the Falklands as a matter of course. He seemed resigned to this, but commented that even if the Argentines did not ask for permission to enter Falkland Islands airspace, at least they might inform the authorities when they intended to do so.

7. Rather unexpectedly, Mr Cheek also expressed some concern at the way in which armed marines were now habitually turning out to meet all scheduled LADE flights. They were certainly very visible standing beside their vehicles at the edge of the tarmac and holding ~~weapons~~ ^{their} weapons. When I arrived, Mr Cheek thought that this was unnecessarily provocative, and also gave visitors a bad impression.

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Falkland Islands Committee

8. At their invitation I attended a short meeting of the Falkland Islands Committee at the Rose Hotel. Although I was received quite cordially, it was obvious that the Committee still represents an extremist fringe in the Islands. They were very aggressive about current Argentine attitudes, and took particular exception to what they believed to be a genuine issue of Argentine postage stamps bearing the name of "Islas Malvinas, Republica de Argentina". They had received a photocopy of this, taken I believe from ~~the~~ Argentine magazine "Semana" and expressed the hope that we would issue an official protest (I have not yet located the original version of the magazine, but, as I told them, the "stamps" are almost certainly spoofs). There was also some particularly silly talk about Argentine attempts to poison the fish stocks around the Falklands: this was based on the fact that a considerable number of dead fish had been washed ashore at various points around the Islands (in fact the Polish factory ship later accepted responsibility, attributing the incident to a broken trawl net). I was also asked if I thought it likely that an Argentine aircraft carrier was cruising close off shore. The question arose because someone in West Falklands had allegedly heard the sound of a light aircraft flying at night on several occasions, and the only interpretation that they could put on this was that it must have been flying from an Argentine vessel. I told them I knew nothing about it and thought the hypothesis plausible. As ever, the FCO were obviously regarded as the villains of the piece; they had no kind words either for officials or for Ministers, and when I commented that Mr Rolands seemed to have established a particularly close relationship with Islanders, was told that it was he who had committed the worst betrayal by first agreeing to talk to the Argentines about sovereignty.

Polish Defectors

9. A Polish factory ship was anchored off Port Stanley as usual and several trawlers came in and out while I was there. The total of defectors from the Polish ships has now risen to nine, and they are already creating considerable local problems in terms of work and accommodation. (Five of the defectors had earlier written to the Canadian Embassy in Buenos Aires asking if it were possible for them to travel to Canada; after discussion with Mr Brock before my departure for Port Stanley I took down with me a batch of application forms which I left with the Chief Secretary.).

10. In spite of the defectors the crew members are still being allowed ashore from the Polish ships and the atmosphere appears to be relaxed. I was told by the Harbour Master that all the defectors had been told by the Captain that so long as they returned to the ship within 14 days the authorities in Poland would not be notified (none of them appeared to have responded to this invitation); I was also told that one defector was even allowed to return to the ship to collect his personal belongings.

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base
The outgoing/Commander of Grytviken, Mr Peter Witty, who arrived in Port Stanley on board the RRS "John Biscoe" during my visit, told me that there had been three Polish trawlers off South Georgia, apparently under supervision of a Russian ship upon which they were dependent for fuel. He had heard that in December some of the Poles had discussed the possibility of transferring the fuel from two of the trawlers to the third one and then making a run for the South American mainland; nothing of course had come of this. Meanwhile the Polish fishing operation continues, and relations with both the Captain and the crew appear to be congenial.

Other Points

11. I had a useful meeting with the Stanley Manager of the Falkland Islands Company, Mr Harry Milne, and his ~~imminent~~ successor, Mr Terry Spruce, concerning the problems connected with YPF fuel deliveries. I am minuting about this separately.

12. I was also able to meet the recently arrived LADE representative, Vice Comodoro Gamen, who succeeded Vice Comodoro Gilbert some six weeks ago. Gamen seemed to be a pleasant person, who had made a good initial impression, although his spoken English is not very good. He is accompanied by his wife, and their three children are all attending school in Port Stanley.

M. Hickson

19 March 1982

M Hickson

ccs: C C Bright Esq
SAmD
F C O

M W Growcott Esq
PORT STANLEY

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DUTY VISIT TO FALKLAND ISLANDS, 9 - 17 MARCH 1982

SUMMARY OF MAIN OFFICIAL CALLS

9 March

15.30 - Arrive Stanley Airport
16.00 - HE The Governor
16.45 - Vice Comodoro Gamen (at LADE office)
17.30 - Councillor J E Cheek

10 March

09.00 - Chief Secretary, Mr F E Baker
10.00 - Financial Secretary, Mr H T Rowlands
10.45 - Superintendent of Posts and Tele-
communications, Mr W A Etheridge
11.15 - Director of Civil Aviation, Mr G W
Cheek (at Stanley Airport)
14.15 - Discussion with Governor
14.30 - Mr H M Milne, Stanley Manager of FICo, and
Mr T G Spruce, Accountant, FICo.
16.00 - Councillor Mrs Mary Jennings
19.00 - 40 guests at cocktail party at Mr and Mrs
Growcott's house.

11 March

19.00 - Senior Magistrate (and Extraordinary
Member of ExCo), Mr H Bennett JP
10.00 - Ex-Councillor Mr Stuart Wallace
11.00 - Councillor W H Goss
12.30 - Drinks with NP8901 etc (at Government House)
16.00 - Discussion with Governor
18.00 - Falkland Islands Committee (Mr K C Summers,
Mrs Velma Malcolm, Mrs Betty Miller).
20.00 - Dinner Party with Mr and Mrs F E Baker.

12 March

09.00 - Fly to Hill Cove Settlement as guest of
Councillor and Mrs L G Blake.

13 March

(pm) - Joined at Hill Cove by Councillor and Mrs
W K Luxton.



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15 March

12.00 - Arrive back at Stanley Airport
15.00 - Mr D G B King, Proprietor of Upland Goose Hotel.

16 March

08.00 - Ex-Councillor (now Agricultural Officer) Mr A B Monk.
09.30 - Head of Grasslands Trials Unit, Dr J A Ferguson, (followed by visit to experimental area at the Camber).
12.30 - Drinks with all Councillors at Government House.
14.00 - Senior Medical Officer, Dr D H Haines (at Stanley Hospital).
15.30 - Captain Malcolm Phelps (on board RRS "John Biscoe").
17.00 - Mr Peter Witty (outgoing Commander of BAS Base at Grytviken, South Georgia).
20.00 - Dinner party at Government House.

17 March

08.00 - Depart by air from Stanley Airport.