



Prime Minister

It seems right that you
should not see these people
but that Mr. Onslow should.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

23 March 1983

A.J.C. $\frac{23}{8}$

John [unclear]

WJ
MJ

Delegation of Argentine Relatives

We know from reports in the Argentine press and a BBC television news report that a delegation of five fathers of missing Argentine servicemen is visiting Europe as representatives of 'The Association of Fathers and Relatives of Servicemen Missing in the Falklands'.

They are hoping to see Heads of State in Paris and Madrid, the Pope and the ICRC, but we have no information so far as to the level at which they will in fact be received. They have said that they intend to come to London and hope to be received by the Prime Minister. As yet we have not received any visa applications, but we think it necessary to prepare a position against the probability of a request to visit this country at short notice.

Before leaving Argentina the leader of the group, Sr Gimenez, told the press that their object was to bring pressure to bear on the British Government to release more facts about those not yet accounted for. Presumably the tour of European capitals is intended to help achieve this purpose. The delegation's visit is partially subsidised by a grant from the Argentine Army.

Although this indicates that the tour does have a propagandist element, it is also clear that 'The Association of Fathers and Relatives' has a genuine, humanitarian task to perform. It appears that the Argentine authorities have been less than conscientious in passing on information to servicemen's families: and in the confusion of hasty conscription and troop deployments the authorities themselves may be unable to account for the movements of every serviceman.

/involved



involved in the Falklands campaign. This has given rise to rumours of the existence of internment camps on the Islands, and to false hopes that individual Argentines may still be in hiding.

Our own record on the treatment of Argentine prisoners of war and burial of the dead is good and stands up well to public scrutiny. We have adhered strictly to the requirements of the Geneva Convention and passed on all information promptly to the ICRC. The ICRC have commented favourably on our co-operation. Mr Onslow (in Mr Pym's absence) believes there would be every advantage in admitting the delegation to Britain and receiving them at ministerial level, making it clear that we have nothing to hide. We could give the delegation the Full POW register and the Graves Register, as already transmitted to the ICRC. Mr Onslow would be prepared to see the delegation. We would not consider that a meeting with the Prime Minister would be appropriate.

According to a BBC News interview with members of the delegation on their arrival in Paris on 19 March, they plan to request that the bodies of individual Argentines buried at Darwin should be returned to their families. On several occasions before the burial ceremony on 19 February we offered to repatriate the 220 bodies. The Argentine Government have not taken up this offer. We would propose to stand by the offer, and to tell the delegation that they must approach their own government to achieve repatriation of the dead.

Yours ever,
R B Bone

(R B Bone)
Private Secretary

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