

5

1



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1

Telephone 01-~~830 7072~~ 218 2111/3

MO 5/21

11th April 1983

*We are putting a considerable  
 budget in the Commission. Surely before he will  
 allow the Argentine to visit  
 Prime Minister.*

*Dear John, the remaining content will have instructions to General  
 he should discuss those?  
 the matter with the  
 11/4/83  
 G. J. C. 11/4  
 4  
 A. J. C. 11/4  
 4  
 10/4/83  
 10/4/83  
 10/4/83*

FALKLANDS VISIT OF ARGENTINE NEXT OF KIN

In your letter of 6th April to Brian Fall you conveyed the Prime Minister's views on the negotiations with the ICRC over this visit. The Commander of British Forces on the Falkland Islands (CBFFI) has separately sought advice on the steps he should take if the Argentines arrive having failed to observe some of our conditions.

Mr Heseltine has explained the impracticability of preventing a determined ship from reaching the Falkland Islands without risking loss of life or damage to our own vessels. At the OD(EM) meeting on 28th March, the point was made that if Destefanis set sail without ICRC approval it would be preferable to allow the Argentine next of kin to visit the Darwin cemetery than to let an unseemly scene develop.

Against this background, the Defence Secretary believes that we should instruct CBFFI as follows:

- a. If the visit takes place with the agreed ICRC involvement, CBFFI should assume that they have taken the necessary steps to ensure the strictly humanitarian nature of the visit and that our specific conditions have been met. No searches of those involved should therefore be carried out unless CBFFI has reason to believe that some of the conditions are being infringed (eg the presence of press or uniformed personnel, carriage of firearms or flags). In such cases, he should have full discretion to take whatever steps he considers necessary to safeguard the integrity of the Falkland Islands and the safety of troops and Islanders, including detaining those involved until their ship is ready to depart. He may also take such action as he considers necessary if at any time his instructions are not observed.

SECRET



b. If the Argentines arrive without authority of ICRC involvement, CBFFI should challenge the vessel at the edge of the FIPZ and seek (if possible by an agreed boarding) to satisfy himself that its purpose is genuinely humanitarian. He should report the position to the MOD, and escort the vessel to Choiseul Sound. If he is not satisfied with the Argentines' purpose, or if their ship refuses to lower an Argentine flag, he should tell the occupants to remain on board until he has received instructions from his Government. If they attempt to land, he should arrest them. If, on the other hand, he is satisfied that the visit is genuinely humanitarian, he should allow the next of kin to visit the cemetery, but should apply the same conditions passed to them via the ICRC (eg no Argentine press, no uniforms, no Destefanis, etc).

On the question of press coverage of the visit, Mr Heseltine believes that we should allow those press (UK or other) on the Falklands to film, photograph and report the visit, not least to demonstrate our sympathetic humanitarian stance, but that no interviews should be allowed.

I understand that the Foreign Secretary broadly agrees with the approach outlined in this letter, and would be grateful if you would seek the Prime Minister's early reaction.

I am copying this to the Private Secretaries of OD(EM) members and to Richard Hatfield in the Cabinet Office.

Your ever  
rich Evans

(N H R EVANS)

ARGENTINA  
Relations 1833

17 APR 1983



COMPTON

OD(EM)

080

file



Ho  
HMT  
Fco  
Coho  
+ Co

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

12 April 1983

FALKLANDS VISIT OF ARGENTINE NEXT OF KIN

Thank you for your letter of 11 April outlining the instructions which your Secretary of State believes should be sent to CBFFI in connection with this visit.

The Prime Minister is content with the proposed guidance for the case where the visit takes place with agreed ICRC involvement.

As regards the situation which would arise if the Argentines arrived without ICRC involvement, the Prime Minister feels that the proposed instructions place a considerable burden on CBFFI. She considers that if General Thorne judges that, despite the irregularity of a visit in these circumstances, its purpose is genuinely humanitarian, the next step ought to be a discussion with the Falkland Islands Council, since in those circumstances it would be better to proceed with their agreement. Subject to this point, the Prime Minister is content with the proposed guidance.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Private Secretaries to the members of OD(EM) and to Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

A. J. COLES

Nick Evans, Esq.,  
Ministry of Defence.

NR