

CONFIDENTIAL



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

Prime Minister

Agree telegram?

A.J.C. 1/4

- see notes at side

11 April, 1983

John Tahan

Falkland Islands: Argentine Next-of-Kin Visit

You will have seen from UKMIS Geneva telno 145 that Destefanis has now responded to the conditions put to him by the ICRC. I enclose a translation of his message.

Destefanis's response is unsatisfactory. It has a distinctly propagandist tone, and its contents are unacceptable in their insistence on an Argentine ship; the attempt to widen the interpretation of next-of-kin; and the demand for press participation. The ICRC have undertaken to give us, very soon, their comments on the message; but we believe that we should be ready without delay to leave them in no doubt of our own views, and also to remind the ICRC that it is they who must run the negotiations with Destefanis. I enclose a draft telegram which we propose to send to Geneva with this in view.

We have not, in the circumstances, been able to show this to Mr Pym today. I am arranging for the draft telegram to be sent to him this evening for clearance, with a view to despatching to Geneva during the course of tomorrow morning.

Yours ever
R B Bone

(R B Bone)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
Private Secretary
10 Downing Street

OUT TELEGRAM

	Classification and Caveats CONFIDENTIAL	Precedence/Deskby IMMEDIATE
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ZCZC 1 ZCZC
 GRS 2 GRS
 CLASS 3 CONFIDENTIAL
 CAVEATS 4
 DESKBY 5
 FM FCO 6 FM FCO APRIL 1983
 PRE/ADD 7 TO IMMEDIATE UKMIS GENEVA
 TEL NO 8 TELEGRAM NUMBER
 9 YOUR TELNO 145 AND TELECON LONG/WESTBROOK: ARGENTINE NEXT
 10 OF KIN VISIT
 11 1. Please ensure that all discussion with ICRC of Destefanis's ^{response}
 12 is at the highest possible level. Either when they call you in
 13 to give their promised comments or, if you judge it appropriate,
 14 before, you should ~~express our appreciation for early sight of~~
 15 ~~text of response.~~ *Thank them for showing us so quickly the text of Destefanis's answer.* For your own information, however, ICRC's
 16 transmission of response to us without comment suggests a need
 17 to stiffen their resolve, and your main objective must be to
 18 get the ICRC more positively engaged in the exercise. Should it
 19 break down, it is important that we should be able to point out
 20 that such a decision derives from ICRC's judgement of Destefanis's
 21 credentials. You should therefore politely but firmly remind the
 22 ICRC that it is they who are in negotiation with Destefanis, not
 23 the British Government, and that they have from the first been
 24 generally content with the conditions we have proposed.
 25 2. On detailed points in Destefanis's response, you may draw

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NNNN ends telegram	BLANK	Catchword on
File number	Dept Private Office	Distribution
Drafted by (Block capitals) R B BONE		
Telephone number 233 4831		
Authorised for despatch		
Comcen reference	Time of despatch	

OUT TELEGRAM (CONT)

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2 on the following:

3 a. We ~~imagine~~ *imagine* that the ICRC will agree with us that

4 much more is needed than a mere personal assurance from

5 Destefanis of the humanitarian purpose of the trip (his

6 point 'b'). We must rely on the ICRC's assessment and

7 would expect them to have consulted the Argentine

8 Government on the point.

9 b. Destefanis's response, especially point 'h', is

10 couched in terms that make it more difficult for us to

11 believe in the genuine humanitarian purposes he himself

12 professes. He seems to be making political capital out of

13 the sorrow of the bereaved families. This is very much

14 at odds with the sincerity of a delegation from the

15 Association of Parents and Relatives of Servicemen Missing

16 in the Falklands received in London on 7 April. (The

17 latter volunteered to Mr Onslow that they regarded

18 Destefanis's organisation as politically motivated, and

19 specifically disclaimed any connection with him).

20 c. Destefanis's point 'd'. Against the background that

21 Argentina has still to declare a definitive end to

22 hostilities or to renounce the use of force, and our

23 consequent need to guarantee the security of the Falkland

24 Islands; and bearing in mind Islander reluctance to accept

25 the idea of Argentines visiting their land, the ICRC will

26 understand that we should not be expected to accept an

27 Argentine vessel *not an Argentine crew.*

28 d. As far as the press is concerned, insistence on their

29 presence only increases our unease that Destefanis is

30 engaged in a political exercise. This has to be a private

31 visit. We recognise however that the Argentine next of

32 kin would not wish the occasion to go entirely unrecorded

33 and to that end we are prepared to offer the services of

34 a photographer.

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NNNN ends
telegram

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Catchword
e.

OUT TELEGRAM (CONT)

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*How
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 Please define*

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 e. Destefanis's point 'c'. We are prepared to be flexible in our interpretation of next of kin. But not so flexible as to allow Destefanis himself to accompany the party ashore. The ICRC will no doubt agree that both of us will need adequate time to scrutinise the Argentine list.
 3. You should assure the ICRC that we stand by our statement of readiness in principle to authorise a purely humanitarian visit. Please also remind them that the same statement recalled the offer which has been made to the Argentine Government on several occasions to return to Argentina the bodies of their servicemen at present buried on the Falkland Islands. Acceptance of the offer would remove the need for exchanges such as those of the ICRC with Destefanis.

PYM
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Unofficial Translation

FALKLAND ISLANDS : ARGENTINE NEXT-OF-KIN VISIT : RESPONSE TO
CONDITIONS PUT BY INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

[In French]

Text of the response of Mr Destefanis received on 6 April 1983 at
our delegation in Buenos Aires.

[In Spanish]

(a) This is accepted on the understanding that the organisation of
the trip will be carried out by [or at the expense of] The Centre
of Volunteers for the Fatherland and that the ICRC will supervise
the organisation of the trip with all its possibilities. We shall
accept all the co-operation which the ICRC may be willing to provide.

(b) We assure the ICRC emphatically that the purpose of the trip is
absolutely humanitarian.

(c) We shall inform the ICRC with all possible notice of the names
of the travellers and their relationship with the Argentinian
soldiers who fell in the Malvinas. We consider that admission must
be granted to all family members without any exclusions based on the
degree of the relationship. The fiancées of the soldiers must also
be admitted.

(d) The ICRC will be informed in advance of the name and other
characteristics of the ship. We request that it should fly the
Red Cross flag. Because of lack of economic resources, it is
completely impossible for us to contract a ship which is not
Argentinian. We have accepted the generous offer of a private
Argentinian shipping company to provide the means of transport for
us free of charge. But the crew will consequently be its existing
one. No member of the crew will disembark in the Malvinas.

(e) We shall inform the ICRC of the route foreseen to reach the
Malvinas.

(f) We have no objection, to savour the negotiations, in carrying
out the trip after 16 April provided that the delay does not exceed
20 days at the most.

(g) We accept this. This point was proposed by us.

(h) Bearing in mind the openly hostile declaration made by the inhabitants of the Islands, the negative declaration of the British military and civil authorities present in the Malvinas and in the light of some facts which occurred during the conflict such as:

- (i) The sinking of the cruiser General Belgrano by a British submarine outside the Zone of War or Exclusion by the British Government itself, causing hundreds of victims.
- (ii) The death of the Argentine NCO Felix Oscar Artuso at the hands of British soldiers after he had been taken prisoner and as such being protected by the Geneva Convention.
- (iii) The attack by British forces on the Argentine hospital ship by Bahia Paraiso which was flying a Red Cross flag and was appropriately identified and registered and carrying out the evacuation of wounded at Puerto Argentina.

(i) We consider that the presence of representatives of the international press will prevent repetition of incidents of this type and will serve to ensure a correct and humanitarian treatment for the Argentine family members. In order to ensure the greatest equanimity [sic] in the handling of information we have invited members of the most serious British press for them and those of other internal countries.

(j) The family members will have to disembark in a single group and be taken altogether to the cemetery. We consider it inappropriate that contact should take place between the members of the Argentine group and the inhabitants of the Islands. We must be allowed to remain a minimum of two hours at the cemetery.



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

12 April 1983

FALKLAND ISLANDS: ARGENTINE NEXT-OF-KIN VISIT

Thank you for your letter of 11 April enclosing a draft telegram of instructions for UKMis Geneva for their next round of discussions with the ICRC.

As I told you on the telephone this morning, the Prime Minister is content for the telegram to issue, subject to the following changes:

- (a) In lines 14 and 15 on page 1, delete "express our appreciation for early sight of text of response" and substitute "thank them for showing us so quickly the text of Destefanis' answer."
- (b) In line 27 on page 2, add the words "nor an Argentine crew."
- (c) Reword the sentence in lines 2 and 3 on page 3 to read:
 "We expect the party to consist of close relatives of the dead."
 Some consequential rewording to the next sentence will then be necessary.
- (d) In line 10 on page 3, add after "visit" the words "by close relatives of the dead."

We discussed on the telephone certain further amendments which you told me the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary wished to see made, and I confirm that I expressed the view that the Prime Minister would be content with these.

A. J. COLLS

R. B. Bone, Esq.,
 Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

VA/FCO 001/9

00 FCO (DESKBY 110800Z)

00 PERSONAL FOR CIVIL COMMISSIONER PORT STANLEY

00 MODUK

00 MONTEVIDEO

00 BISBA

PP WASHINGTON

PP UKMIS NEW YORK

GRS 230

CONFIDENTIAL

DESKBY 110800Z

FROM UKMIS GENEVA 090950Z APR 83

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELNO 145 OF 9 APRIL

INFO IMMEDIATE PERSONAL FOR CIVIL COMMISSIONER PORT STANLEY, MODUK, MONTEVIDEO, BIS BUENOS AIRES, INFO PRIORITY WASHINGTON, UKMIS NEW YORK

MY TELNO 142: ARGENTINE NEXT-OF-KIN VISIT TO FALKLANDS

1. AS REPORTED BY TELEPHONE, ICRC HEADQUARTERS INFORMED US LATE ON 8 APRIL OF THE RECEIPT OF A TELEX FROM THEIR DELEGATE, CORTHESEY, IN BUENOS AIRES. IN THE ABSENCE ON SICK LEAVE OF ALL THEIR SENIOR PEOPLE INVOLVED, THEY SIMPLY GAVE US AN ADVANCE COPY OF THIS TELEX, WHICH IS TO BE CONVEYED TO US MORE FORMALLY ON 11 APRIL. WE COPIED IT TO THE DEPARTMENT BY FACSIMILE.

2. THE ICRC TELEX CONSISTS OF A REPETITION OF A TELEX IN SPANISH RECEIVED AT THE ICRC OFFICE IN BUENOS AIRES ON 6 APRIL FROM DESTEFANIS. IN CORTHESEY'S ABSENCE IN MONTEVIDEO, NO ACTION WAS TAKEN ON THIS UNTIL 8 APRIL.

3. DESTEFANIS'S MESSAGE ACCEPTS SEVERAL OF OUR CONDITIONS BUT REJECTS OTHERS, NOTABLY IN INSISTING ON AN ARGENTINE SHIP, ON A WIDE DEFINITION OF FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS (CLEARLY DESIGNED TO INCLUDE DESTEFANIS HIMSELF) AND ON THE INCLUSION OF MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES.

IMMEDIATE
ADVANCE COPY

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Head FIB
Head Sam D.
Head News D.
PS(6)
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Mr. G. G. G.
Mr. Ure
Ho 10 (4)
Rc.
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~~B. DESTEFANIS'S MESSAGE ACCEPTS SEVERAL OF OUR CONDITIONS BUT REJECTS OTHERS, NOTABLY IN INSISTING ON AN ARGENTINE SHIP, ON A WIDE DEFINITION OF FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS (CLEARLY DESIGNED TO INCLUDE DESTEFANIS HIMSELF) AND ON THE INCLUSION OF MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES, WHOM DESTEFANIS CLAIMS TO HAVE INVITED ALREADY IN ORDER TO PREVENT ANY INCIDENTS LIKE THE SINKING OF THE BELGRANO, THE SHOOTING OF ARTUSO AND THE ATTACK ON THE BAHIA PARAISO (SIC).~~

4. WE SHALL PRESS THE ICRC ON 11 APRIL TO GIVE US THEIR VIEWS ON THIS RESPONSE, AND IN PARTICULAR WHAT SOLID REASONS THEY CAN SEE TO CONTINUE TO REGARD DESTEFANIS'S PLANS IN A HUMANITARIAN LIGHT. IT MAY TAKE A LITTLE TIME TO EXTRACT A CONSIDERED AND AUTHORITATIVE VIEW FROM THEM. THEIR LACK OF RESOURCES IS CLEARLY EVIDENCED BY PARAGRAPHS 1 AND 2 ABOVE.

LONG

NNNN

SENT / RECD AT 09/1013Z IM/RK

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