

CONFIDENTIAL



hq vr

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

15 April 1983

Falklands: Argentine Next of Kin Visit

Thank you for your letter of 14 April enclosing a revised telegram of instructions to UKMIS Geneva. As I told you on the telephone last night, the Prime Minister is content with the instructions subject to the following comments:

- (a) the opening words of paragraph 3 should read: "With regard to sailing under the Red Cross flag, we presume the ICRC themselves would insist that their flag is not used unless the visit ..."
- (b) The words "under strict ICRC supervision" should be inserted after "Falklands waters" at the top of page 4.

As I said to you on the telephone, the Prime Minister considers that if at any point we wish to take forward the idea that an Argentine vessel should visit the Falklands to take away the bodies of Argentine servicemen buried on the Islands, the agreement of the Islands Council should be sought.

A. J. COLES

J.E. Holmes, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

CONFIDENTIAL

010
CONFIDENTIAL



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

14 April 1983

Dear John,

Falklands: Argentine Next of Kin Visit

Following the discussion in Cabinet this morning, I enclose a revised version of our instructions to UKMis Geneva. It would be helpful if these could be approved as soon as possible since, otherwise, Sir Peter Marshall may miss the chance to take action with the President of the ICRC.

Mr Pym has not yet seen these revised instructions but I am showing them to him in parallel.

Yours ever

John Holmes

(J E Holmes)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street

CONFIDENTIAL

11 4 APR 1963



OUT TELEGRAM

Classification and Caveats

CONFIDENTIAL

Precedence/Deskby

IMMEDIATE

ZCZC
GRS
CLASS
CAVEATS
DESKBY
FM FCO
PRE/ADD
TEL NO

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

ZCZC

GRS

CONFIDENTIAL

FM FCO

TO IMMEDIATE UKMIS GENEVA

TELEGRAM NUMBER

IMMEDIATE PERSONAL CIVIL COMMISSIONER PORT STANLEY, MONTEVIDEO
YOUR TELNO 147: FALKLANDS: ARGENTINE NEXT OF KIN

daily

1. We accept that the ICRC interest is purely humanitarian
but ~~we~~ they must be made aware of the political facts. You should
therefore call on Hay personally as soon as possible and speak
on the lines below.

2. Ministers are most concerned at the way this is developing,
particularly in the light of the press reports today that
Sr Destefanis is contemplating sailing under the Red Cross
flag without ICRC authority or British Government agreement
on 30 April, and appears to have in mind three trips. You should
tell the ICRC that there is growing concern and doubt here
about Sr Destefanis's motives. It seems increasingly likely
that he is doing no more than attempting to make political
capital out of the project. You should ask them to warn him
that any visit cannot take place without the cooperation of the
British authorities, not least because of the formidable

///
//
/

NNNN ends telegram	BLANK	Catchword practical
File number	Dept	Distribution FALKLANDS FUTURE
Drafted by (Block capitals) PRIVATE SECRETARY		
Telephone number		
Authorised for despatch		
Comcen reference	Time of despatch	

OUT TELEGRAM (CONT)

	Classification and Caveats	Page
	CONFIDENTIAL	2.

<<<<
 1
 2
 3
 4
 5
 6
 7
 8
 9
 10
 11
 12
 13
 14
 15
 16
 17
 18
 19
 20
 21
 22
 23
 24
 25
 26
 27
 28
 29
 30
 31
 32
 33
 34
 ///
 //
 /

<<<<
 practical difficulties of visiting the Islands. Would they
 please also seek clarification of the reported remarks about
 three visits? As we have said all along we could only contemplate
 a single visit (this is a point to which we attach considerable
 importance. We hope that the ICRC have made this clear to the
 Argentine Government and that the latter understand that if they
 allow a Destefanis-sponsored visit to go ahead, assuming our
 conditions are met, there will be no second chance later, eg
 if the Argentine authorities or a private individual wanted to include
 those relatives who do not want to be involved with
 Destefanis. The latter of course include the group which
 called on Mr Onslow).
 3. With regard to sailing under the Red Cross flag, we presume
 the ICRC themselves would have reservations about the use of their
 flag unless the visit were organised by them. In any event,
 our doubts about Destefanis have confirmed us in our view that we
 can only accept a visit which is both organised and supervised
 by the ICRC. You should make this absolutely clear to Hay. We
 do not regard ourselves as negotiating with Destefanis through
 the medium of the ICRC. Our position is that we are ready to
 agree to a genuinely humanitarian visit provided that our
 conditions are satisfactorily met and that it is organised and
 supervised by the ICRC. It is ultimately for the ICRC and not
 Destefanis to make us a proposal for a visit, which we will then
 consider. What we have agreed is the principle of a humanitarian
 visit by close relatives. Destefanis may be involved in this
 in some way (although as you know we would not accept him landing
 on the Islands) but it is for the ICRC to fit his role into a
 package acceptable to us. The ICRC should be aware of the
 strength of feeling in the Islands about any visit, and in
 particular their growing indignation about Destefanis and
 his statements. This is not something the British Government can,

with that then flag is not used

*by
k*

NNNN ends telegram	BLANK	Catchword or wish to,
--------------------	-------	--------------------------

OUT TELEGRAM (CONT)

	Classification and Caveats CONFIDENTIAL	Page 3.
--	---	------------

<<<<
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
/// 31
// 32
/ 33
34

<<<<
or wish to, ignore.
4. On more detailed points, following up Long's conversation with Pasquier, you should draw on the following:
i) You should make again the points in para 2 of my telno 90. There is no room for manoeuvre on the unacceptability of an Argentine vessel. The ICRC and Destefanis should be in no doubt that this is one of the conditions. In this context you could also remind Hay of the Uruguayan Government's offer of good offices, and suggest that against this background they may have ideas about the problem of the ship.
ii) As regards the ICRC's reference to our earlier willingness to accept Argentine vessels to remove Argentine dead from the Islands, you should say that, if the Argentine Government were to take up our offer to return to Argentina the bodies of their servicemen at present buried on the Falkland Islands, the

NNNN ends telegram	BLANK	Catchword prospect
--------------------	-------	-----------------------

OUT TELEGRAM (CONT)

	Classification and Caveats CONFIDENTIAL	Page 4.
--	--	------------

<<<<
 Islanders
 L
 ///
 //
 /
 34

1 <<<< *under the ICRC's strict operation*
 2 prospect of an Argentine vessel in Falklands waters could be
 3 viewed on a basis altogether different from that of the
 4 Destefanis exercise. L You might suggest to Hay that, when the
 5 ICRC carry forward their consultations with the Argentine
 6 Government - and we are pleased to note that these are in hand -
 7 this distinction could be pointed out. The ICRC will also wish
 8 to note that the Minister of State was told by the delegation
 9 from the Association of Parents and Relatives of Argentine
 10 servicemen missing in the Falklands (my telno 47 to BIS
 11 Buenos Aires) that, according to Argentine military tradition,
 12 their servicemen should when possible be returned for burial
 13 near the places where they were born.
 14 iii) On the question of which relatives we regard as qualifying,
 15 you should say that while it is obviously difficult to lay down
 16 hard and fast rules in advance, we continue to believe that the
 17 visit should be confined to close relatives. We will scrutinise
 18 any list provided in this light.
 19 5. As we look ahead to the next stages of this operation, we
 20 are coming increasingly to the view that, unless the ICRC
 21 can swiftly resolve the complications, it will simply not be
 22 feasible to arrange a visit of Argentine next of kin before the
 23 forthcoming Falklands winter. There are so many loose ends that,
 24 with the best will in the world, the only appropriate course could
 25 prove to be postponement of any visit until the next Falklands
 26 summer. You have discretion, if a suitable opportunity arises,
 27 and you think that it would not jeopardize cooperation, to warn
 28 of this possibility, while reiterating our readiness in principle
 29 to accept a genuine humanitarian group.
 30 6. You should also ensure that the ICRC are aware that the
 31 Association of Parents and Relatives, following their call on
 32 Mr Onslow on 7 April, have now requested permission to visit
 33 the Islands.
 34

NNNN ends telegram	BLANK	Catchword <i>DM</i>
--------------------	-------	------------------------

OUT TELEGRAM (CONT)

	Classification and Caveats CONFIDENTIAL	Page 5
--	--	-----------

<<<<

1 <<<<
 2 7. If there is any suggestion that we are going back, in spirit
 3 if not in letter, on what we have said to the ICRC previously, or
 4 that our attitude is changing because our own next of kin visit
 5 is nearly over, you should rebut this firmly. The offer of a
 6 humanitarian visit remains, subject to the conditions which the
 7 ICRC themselves previously accepted as reasonable. But we are
 8 bound to take into account Destefanis's obviously political and
 9 at times insulting approach. We have not so far responded
 10 publicly, but it is increasingly difficult for us not to do so.
 11
 12 PYM
 13 NNNN
 14
 15
 16
 17
 18
 19
 20
 21
 22
 23
 24
 25
 26
 27
 28
 29
 30
 31
 32
 33
 34

///
 //
 /

NNNN ends telegram	BLANK	Catchword
--------------------	-------	-----------

CONFIDENTIAL

Prime Minister
Agree draft?



Yes
md

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

Duty clerk

13/4

13 April 1983

Overtaken by letter
of 14 April.

AM 19/4

ms

Dear John,

Falklands: Argentine Next of Kin Visit

You will have seen the initial ICRC comments on Destefanis's response to our conditions in UKMis Geneva telno 147 (attached). Our Mission spoke in accordance with the instructions we sent them on 12 April, but we still have to put across at the highest level the points in these instructions. Moreover, the ICRC initial reaction continues to be disappointing and we must attempt to stiffen their resolve further. I enclose a draft telegram of instructions to Sir P Marshall to take action with the President of the ICRC. You will see that this includes the thought that time is running short for an Argentine visit before the winter. This point will obviously need to be put across with some delicacy since, while it would suit us very well for no Destefanis-organised visit to take place soon, we must not appear to the ICRC to have been insincere in our original willingness to accept a visit or to have been playing them along until our own next of kin visit was over.

Flo tel 90

Mr Pym was not able to see these draft instructions this evening. I am therefore submitting them to him in parallel. UKMis Geneva have told us that they have a good chance of getting at the President of the ICRC on 14 April. It would therefore be helpful if the telegram could be despatched as soon as possible tomorrow morning.

Yours ever

(J E Holmes)
Private Secretary

John Holmes

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street

CONFIDENTIAL

ARGENTINA: Relations

pp 33.

OUT TELEGRAM

Classification and Caveats
CONFIDENTIAL

Precedence/Deskby
IMMEDIATE

ZCZC
GRS
CLASS
CAVEATS
DESKBY
FM FCO
PRE/ADD
TEL NO

1 ZCZC
2 GRS
3 CONFIDENTIAL
4
5
6 FM FCO
7 TO IMMEDIATE UKMIS GENEVA
8 TELEGRAM NUMBER
9 IMMEDIATE PERSONAL CIVIL COMMISSIONER PORT STANLEY, MONTEVIDEO
10 YOUR TELNO 147: FALKLANDS: ARGENTINE NEXT OF KIN
11 1. ICRC attitude on exclusion of the press is satisfactory.
12 But, as Long suggested, we would prefer the ICRC not to go back
13 to Destefanis on this alone. While it is perhaps improbable that
14 he would accept the ICRC's views on the press, there is some
15 risk of his doing so and leaving us with the present state of
16 exchanges on other points, which is less satisfactory,
17 especially on the nationality of the vessel.
18 2. The aim should therefore be to build ~~up~~ on the ICRC's
19 acknowledgement that they must play the central role and to
20 persuade them to put to Destefanis all repeat all our reactions
21 to his responses, whether the ICRC can endorse them or not. We
22 accept that their overriding interest is humanitarian, but their
23 President will be aware that certain important political factors
24 cannot be ignored, and we agree that you should pursue all this
25 with Hay personally. Ministers would like you to do so forthwith,

///
//
/

NNNN ends telegram	BLANK	Catchword following
File number	Dept	Distribution
Drafted by (Block capitals) PRIVATE SECRETARY		
Telephone number 233 4641		
Authorised for despatch		
Comcen reference	Time of despatch	

OUT TELEGRAM (CONT)

Classification and Caveats
CONFIDENTIAL

Page
2

<<<<

1 <<<<
 2 following up Long's conversation with Pasquier.
 3 3. Please draw again, at your discretion, on the points in
 4 para 2 of my telno 90, making the point on (e) that we continue
 5 to believe that the visit should be confined to close relatives
 6 and that we will scrutinize any list of those on the visit in
 7 that light. If Hay shows reluctance to convey to Destefanis
 8 our position on the unacceptability of an Argentine vessel - on
 9 which there is no room for manoeuvre - you should encourage him
 10 to see the ICRC as having an obligation to leave Destefanis in
 11 no doubt that this is one of the conditions. The more firmly
 12 the ICRC are prepared to put this to Destefanis, the better
 13 the prospects of his accepting that he really must find a
 14 vessel of some other nationality, and in this context you
 15 could also remind Hay of the Uruguayan Government's offer of
 16 good offices, and suggest that against this background they may
 17 have ideas about the problem of the ship.
 18 4. As regards the ICRC's reference to our earlier willingness
 19 to accept Argentine vessels to remove Argentine dead from the
 20 Islands, you should say that, if the Argentine Government were
 21 to take up our offer to return to Argentina the bodies of their
 22 servicemen at present buried on the Falkland Islands, the
 23 prospect of an Argentine vessel in Falklands waters could be
 24 viewed on a basis altogether different from that of the
 25 Destefanis exercise. You might suggest to Hay that, when the
 26 ICRC carry forward their consultations with the Argentine
 27 Government - and we are pleased to note that these are in hand -
 28 this distinction could be pointed out. The ICRC will also wish
 29 to note that the Minister of State was told by the delegation
 30 from the Association of Parents and Relatives of Argentine
 31 servicemen missing in the Falklands (my telno 47 to BIS Buenos
 32 Aires) that, according to Argentine military tradition, their
 33 servicemen should when possible be returned for burial near
 34 the places where they were born.

///
 //
 /

NNNN ends
telegram

BLANK

Catchword

5. As

OUT TELEGRAM (CONT)

	Classification and Caveats CONFIDENTIAL	Page 3
--	--	-----------

<<<<

1 <<<<
 2 5. As we look ahead to the next stages of this operation, we
 3 are coming increasingly to the view that, unless the ICRC can
 4 swiftly resolve the complications, it will simply not be
 5 feasible to arrange a visit of Argentine next of kin before the
 6 forthcoming Falklands winter. Destefanis himself has put forward
 7 cut-off dates of, initially, 15 May and, now, a week earlier.
 8 There are so many loose ends that, with the best will in the
 9 world, the only appropriate course could prove to be postponement
 10 of any visit until the next Falklands summer. You have
 11 discretion, if a suitable opportunity arises, and you think
 12 that it would not jeopardize co-operation, to warn of this
 13 possibility, while reiterating our readiness in principle
 14 to accept a genuine humanitarian group.
 15 6. You should also say that the Association of Parents and
 16 Relatives have introduced another complication, of which the
 17 ICRC may already be aware. Following their call on Mr Onslow
 18 on 7 April, the group have now requested permission to visit
 19 the Islands. We are not seeking gratuitously to introduce new
 20 difficulties, but the ICRC should know that we are only prepared
 21 to contemplate one Argentine next of kin visit to the
 22 Falklands, and the respective claims of the two organisations
 23 may be difficult to reconcile.
 24
 25 PYM
 26 NNNN
 27
 28
 29
 30
 31
 32
 33
 34

///

//

/

NNNN ends telegram	BLANK	Catchword
--------------------	-------	-----------