

FALKLAND ISLANDS GENERAL (ADVANCES)

39

TYPING

PS
PS/MR HURD
PS/MR ONSLOW
PS/MR RIFKIND
PS/PUS
SIR J BULLARD
SIR I SINCLAIR
MR GIFFARD
MR WRIGHT
~~MR ADAMS~~
LORD N G LENNOX
MR EVANS
MR URE
MR GILLMORE

HD/PUSD (2)
HD/SAMD
HD/FID
HD/DEFENCE DEPT
HD/NEWS DEPT
HD/ERD
HD/ECD(E)
HD/UND
HD/PLANNING STAFF

PS/NO 10 DOWNING ST. (4)
PS/S OF S FOR DEFENCE
MR J STEWART AUSD STAFF-MOD

PS/CHANCELLOR)
MISS M E CUND) TREASURY
MR LITTLER)

SIR R ARMSTRONG)
MR A D S GOODALL) CABINET OFFICE
DIO)

MR M A PATTISON, FID, ODA

MR A TITCHENER)
~~MR C U ROBERTS~~, IAT) DOT
MR A FORTNAM)

~~RESIDENT CLERK~~
DESK BY

M. West - we are making the point clearly.
mb

GRS 500
CONFIDENTIAL
DESKBY 151200Z
FROM UKMIS GENEVA 151040Z APR 83
TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELNO 150 OF 15 APRIL
INFO IMMEDIATE PERSONAL FOR CIVIL COMMISSIONER PORT STANLEY,
MONTEVIDEO

ADVANCE COPY

IMMEDIATE

YOUR TELNO 94: FALKLANDS: ARGENTINE NEXT OF KIN

1. I HAD A FULL DISCUSSION WITH THE PRESIDENT OF THE ICRC THIS MORNING. HEAD OF CHANCERY ACCOMPANIED ME. PASQUIER, ICRC DELEGATE-GENERAL FOR LATIN AMERICA WAS ALSO PRESENT.
2. I SPELLED OUT IN DETAIL THE POINTS IN PARAGRAPHS 2 AND 3 OF TUR. IN PARTICULAR I STRESSED THAT ICRC WAS NOT AN INTERMEDIARY IN A NEGOTIATION BETWEEN HMG AND DESTEFANIS. HMG WERE NEGOTIATING WITH THE ICRC ABOUT A HUMANITARIAN VISIT TO THE FALKLAND ISLANDS IN WHICH DESTEFANIS'S GROUP MIGHT PARTICIPATE, AND IN WHICH OTHERS INCLUDING THE PEOPLE MENTIONED IN PARAGRAPH 6 OF TUR MIGHT ALSO JOIN. ALL WE COULD CONSIDER WOULD BE A FIRM PROPOSAL PUT TO US BY ICRC WHICH WAS IN ACCORDANCE WITH OUR CONDITIONS, NOTABLY ICRC ORGANISATION AND SUPERVISION, THE USE OF A NON-ARGENTINE VESSEL AND WITHOUT THE PARTICIPATION OF THE PRESS. (WE HAD ALREADY STRESSED SEPARATELY TO PASQUIER THAT THERE COULD BE NO QUESTION OF DESTEFANIS HIMSELF SETTING FOOT ON THE ISLANDS.) I ALSO DREW ON THE POINTS IN PARAGRAPHS 4 AND 5.
3. HAY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE REAL INTERESTS OF DESTEFANIS WERE 'PROBABLY NOT EXCLUSIVELY HUMANITARIAN'. HE WAS AN UNPREDICTABLE PERSONALITY, AND ICRC COULD NOT AT PRESENT OFFER ANY GUARANTEE OF HIS GOOD FAITH OR GOOD BEHAVIOUR. BUT IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT FOR THEM TO TAKE THIS LINE PUBLICLY. PASQUIER POINTED OUT THAT ICRC (WHICH HAS ACUTE FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES AT PRESENT, RELATED TO THE IRAN/IRAQ WAR) SIMPLY DID NOT HAVE THE RESOURCES TO UNDERTAKE

~~FROM (RAG WAR) SIMPLY DID NOT HAVE THE RESOURCES TO UNDERTAKE~~
THE DETAILED ORGANISATION OF A CHARTER OPERATION OF THEIR OWN,
IN WHICH DESTEFANIS'S GROUP AND OTHERS MIGHT THEN PARTICIPATE.
I STRESSED ONCE AGAIN THAT A VISIT COULD ONLY TAKE PLACE AT ALL
IF THE ICRC COULD CONVINCE US THAT IT WOULD MEET OUR (MINIMUM)
REQUIREMENTS.

4. I ENQUIRED ABOUT THE ICRC ATTITUDE TO DESTEFANIS'S CLAIM
THAT HE INTENDED TO GO AHEAD REGARDLESS, AND ALSO TO FLY THE RED
CROSS FLAG. I GAVE HAY A COPY OF THE TEXT OF SIR ROBIN DAY'S
TELEPHONE INTERVIEW WITH DESTEFANIS. PASQUIER CONFIRMED THAT
ABUSE OF THE RED CROSS EMBLEM WAS ANATHEMA TO THE ICRC. IF
DESTEFANIS DID THIS, THE ICRC WOULD COMPLAIN AT ONCE TO THE
ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT, WHOSE DUTY IT WAS UNDER THE GENEVA
CONVENTIONS TO SEE THAT THE RED CROSS EMBLEM WAS RESPECTED.

5. PASQUIER CONFIRMED THAT THE ICRC CONTINUED TO RULE OUT ANY
POSSIBILITY OF SUPPORTING A DESTEFANIS OPERATION WHICH INCLUDED
THE PRESS. HE SAID THAT DESTEFANIS PLAYED A CHAMELON-LIKE ROLE.
IN PRIVATE WITH ICRC DELEGATES, HE CONVINCINGLY PLUGGED THE
HUMANITARIAN LINE: IN PUBLIC AND WITH THE PRESS HE WAS
UNPREDICTABLE AND UNRELIABLE. HE HAD FOR EXAMPLE CLAIMED PUBLICLY
ON 14 APRIL THAT A CONTRACT WITH THE COMPANY WHICH OWNED HIS
INTENDED VESSEL, THE LAGO LACAR, A TRAINING SHIP BELONGING TO THE
ARGENTINE NAVAL SCHOOL, WAS CLOSE TO SIGNATURE. THE STATE
COMPANY WHICH OWNED THE SHIP HAD THEN PUBLICLY AND FORMALLY
DENIED THAT THERE HAD BEEN ANY CONTACTS WITH DESTEFANIS AT ALL
ON THE SUBJECT.

6. I CONCLUDED THE DISCUSSION BY SAYING THAT IN ALL THE
CIRCUMSTANCES I PERSONALLY DID NOT SEE HOW THE DESTEFANIS VISIT
COULD TAKE PLACE. HMG HAD THEIR LEGITIMATE PREOCCUPATIONS.
SO DID THE ICRC. THE IDEAS OF DESTEFANIS DID NOT ACCORD WITH THEM.

7. SEE MIFT

MARSHALL

NNNN

SENT/RECD AT 15/1117Z IM/QAL

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ADVANCE COPY

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TO IMMEDIATE FCO
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MIPT: FALKLANDS: ARGENTINE NEXT OF KIN

ASSESSMENT

1. THE ICRC ARE IN NO DOUBT ABOUT THE DIFFICULTIES OF DEALING WITH DESTEFANIS. THEY ARE ALSO NOW COMPLETELY CLEAR ABOUT THE ROLE WE EXPECT THEM TO PLAY IN THE OPERATION, AND EVIDENTLY HAVE GRAVE DOUBTS ABOUT WHETHER IT WILL BE POSSIBLE FOR THEM TO FILL IT. THEY REALISE THAT HMG REMAIN READY IN PRINCIPLE TO ACCEPT A HUMANITARIAN VISIT TO THE ISLANDS BY ARGENTINE RELATIVES OF THOSE BURIED IN THE FALKLANDS, AND ALSO TO AGREE TO THE RETURN TO ARGENTINA (IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARGENTINE MILITARY TRADITION) OF THEIR DEAD NOW BURIED AT PORT STANLEY.
2. I HAD CONSIDERED WHETHER TO PRESS HAY THERE AND THEN TO AGREE THAT A VISIT WAS NOT REALLY POSSIBLE BEFORE THE FORTHCOMING WINTER. BUT FOR THE REASONS WHICH YOU ADDUCE, I JUDGED IT BEST NOT TO PRESS MATTERS ON THIS OCCASION. WE CAN LEAVE THE ICRC FOR A DAY OR TWO TO DECIDE HOW TO TAKE MATTERS FURTHER.
3. IT IS WORTHWHILE ON THE OTHER HAND TO CONSIDER NOW HOW BEST TO CONSOLIDATE OUR POSITION IN PUBLIC AS WELL AS

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NOW HOW BEST TO CONSOLIDATE OUR POSITION IN PUBLIC AS WELL AS
WITH THE ICRC ABOUT THE DESTEFANIS VISIT. I HAVE THE CONSIDERATION
MADE IN PORT STANLEY TELEGRAM NO 267 MUCH IN MIND. THE
FOLLOWING USEFUL POINTS CAN USEFULLY BE BROUGHT OUT IN WHAT
WE SAY PUBLICLY:

(A) THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT MUST BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR RESPECTING
THE WORK OF THE RED CROSS, NOT ONLY AS REGARDS THE FLAG WHICH
ANY SHIP CHARTERED BY DESTEFANIS MIGHT FLY BUT ALSO IN THE
QUESTION OF A VISIT TO THE FALKLAND ISLANDS AS A WHOLE. THE ARGENTINE
GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR SEEING THAT THE HUMANITAR-
-IAN WORK OF THE ICRC IS NOT THREATENED OR DISCREDITED BY ITS
NATIONALS AS INDEED IT WOULD BE BY AN ILL-CONSIDERED AND CAPRICIOUS
PRIVATE VISIT SUCH AS DESTEFANIS APPEARS TO CONTEMPLATE.

(B) IT IS INCREASINLY CLEAR THAT THE DESTEFANIS VISIT CANNOT
BE CONSIDERED IN TOTAL ISOLATION. HE DOES NOT SPEAK FOR ALL
THE RELATIVES OF THE ARGENTINE DEAD. HE APPEARS TO HAVE NO
AUTHORITY FROM THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT. HIS ACTIVITIES
ARE LIKELY TO PREJUDICE THE LEGITIMATE CONCERNS OF OTHER
BEREAVED ARGENTINIANS WHOSE BEHAVIOUR IS MORE APPROPRIATE
IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES, EG THE GROUP WHICH VISITED MR ONSLOW.

(C) WHILE WE RESPECT THE LEGITIMATE CONCERN OF THE RELATIVES
OF THE ARGENTINIAN DEAD AND HAVE DONE SO SINCE THE OUTSET,
AS IS MADE CLEAR IN OUR STATEMENT, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE
TO IGNORE THE STATEMENTS, BOTH WRITTEN AND ORAL, OF MR
DESTEFANIS. THESE CAST GRAVE DOUBTS ON HIS BONA FIDES. IT IS
FOR EXAMPLE ABSURD TO SUGGEST AT ONE AND THE SAME TIME THAT HE
NEEDS THE PROTECTION OF THE ICRC FLAG AND THAT OF THE
WORLD PRESS, ESPECIALLY FOR THE REASONS WHICH HE GIVES. THERE
ARE FALSE AND MALICIOUS ALLEGATIONS AGAINST THE UNITED KINGDOM
GOVERNMENT.

4. YOU MAY ALREADY HAVE CONSIDERED BRINGING IN THE SWISS
GOVERNMENT AT SOME APPROPRIATE STAGE. ENOUGH HAS BEEN SAID PUBLICLY
BY MR DESTEFANIS FOR THE SWISS GOVERNMENT LEGITIMATELY
TO ASK THE ARGENTINE AUTHORITIES WHAT THEIR POSITION IS IN THE
MATTER.

MARSHALL

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