

Prime Minister 1



*Our statement is good.
That of the ICRC
is slightly
unideal.
me,*

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

19 April, 1983

Dear John,

Falklands: Argentine Next of Kin

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I now enclose the text of the statement which the ICRC propose to issue on the morning of 20 April. As you will see, it is slightly less satisfactory than was implied in UKMIS Geneva telex 155, but it should still serve the purpose. I enclose also the text of a draft statement which we would propose that the FCO News Department make once the ICRC statement has become known. This is being put to Mr Pym in parallel overnight.

Yours ever

(J E Holmes)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
Private Secretary
10 Downing Street

TEXT OF STATEMENT TO BE ISSUED BY THE ICRC
ON THE MORNING OF 20 APRIL 1983

On 24 February 1983, Mr Osvaldo Destefanis, President of a private organisation, the Centre for Volunteers for the Fatherland, requested the ICRC's assistance and protection for a trip he intended to organise to the Falkland Islands/Malvinas, to enable relatives of fallen Argentine soldiers to visit Darwin military cemetery, where 220 Argentine soldiers have been laid to rest.

On 28 March 1983, the British authorities, to whom the ICRC had conveyed Mr Destefanis's project, informed the ICRC that they had no objection in principle to the visit, provided guarantees were given that its purpose was exclusively humanitarian, that the ICRC would take part in the journey and that the practical organisation of the trip planned by Mr Destefanis met certain specific conditions.

Mr Destefanis, for his part, intends to organise the trip in a manner different from the practical arrangements specified by the British authorities. All the ICRC can do today is take note of this state of affairs, which prevents it from helping in the operation under the present circumstances. It nevertheless hopes that families wishing to pay their respects to their fallen relatives may be permitted to do so.



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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

20 April 1983

Falklands: Argentine Next of Kin

Thank you for your letter of 19 April. The Prime Minister considers that the ICRC statement enclosed with your letter is regrettably equivocal but that our own proposed statement is satisfactory.

A. J. COLES

John Holmes, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

John

FALKLANDS: ARGENTINE NEXT OF KIN VISIT:

POSSIBLE STATEMENT FOLLOWING PUBLICATION OF ICRC STATEMENT

We wholly accept the ICRC's judgement that given Sr Destefanis's intentions, it is not possible for them to help in his proposed visit. It is clear that, so far as the ICRC are concerned, this visit should not go ahead. In these circumstances, there can clearly be no question of our agreeing to it.

The position of the British Government remains as stated on 28 March, when we made it clear that we have no objection in principle to a visit to the Falklands by relatives of Argentine servicemen who died during the hostilities there, provided that the visit is organised and supervised by the International Committee of the Red Cross, is purely humanitarian in nature, and certain conditions are observed. The points which we specified to the ICRC, and which they relayed to Sr. Destefanis, were those necessary to ensure this.