

CONFIDENTIAL

Argentina  
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ML 26/4

CONSULAR SITREP: 0730 26 APRIL

A. Medical Repatriation of Mrs Thompson and family from Buenos Aires

1. No further developments took place on this case.

B. Possible Release of Arrested British Journalists

2. Mr Baxter of News Department telephoned to see if we had informed the next of kin of the arrested British journalists of their possible release. I said that as we only had an unconfirmed newspaper report no action would be taken until official confirmation of the report was received.

C. Possible anti-British feeling in Venezuela

3. Mr David Slack, British Caledonian duty manager, rang to say that Tony George, his colleague in Caracas, had telephoned him following reports of the British attack on South Georgia. Mr George had said that there was additional anti-British feeling in Venezuela and shipping workers were boycotting British ships. He feared that air traffic controllers might halt the British Caledonian flight due to land at Caracas that evening en route from Quito. After liaison with the political section of Emergency Unit, Mr Slack was advised that Mr George should liaise closely with the Embassy. This he said Mr George had said he would do. Mr Slack said he would keep us advised of any further messages he received from Mr George.

D. Security of British Persons in Argentina

4. A news agency report stating that the Interior Minister, GEN Alfredo Saint Jean, had given instructions to all provincial governments to take all possible measures to guarantee the security of persons, assets and institutions related to Britain and any other country involved in the present conflict was received. A telegram was sent to BISBA seeking confirmation of this report.

E. Assistance to the Islanders

5. A telegram was received from Montevideo in response to our request for an opinion on whether the Uruguayans would be prepared to provide a ship or aircraft for Islanders wishing to leave the Islands temporarily. The telegram stated that as the Uruguayans had been helpful it would be worthwhile to ask them.

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6. A telegram was received from Montevideo estimating the number of Islanders who may wish to leave the Islands temporarily. The telegram said that as reports said the majority of Islanders had left Port Stanley for the interior, they estimated that perhaps less than half of the remaining Islanders would wish to leave. Mr Burgess, one of the latest Islanders to pass through Montevideo, thought that the number wishing to leave could be as low as 'several hundred'. Mr Selwood, another Islander recently in transit, estimated half would wish to leave but many were anxious as they did not have current British passports and were worried at the possibility of travelling on Argentine documents. The telegram estimated that about 1700 Islanders were on the Islands at present.

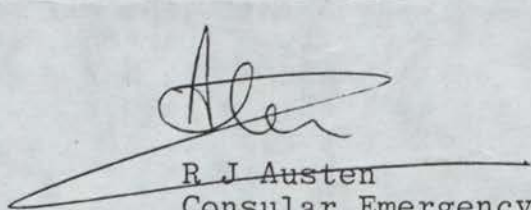
F. Enquiry as to whether the British Hospital in Montevideo had been alerted

7. Mr Brian Baxter, News Department Duty Officer, rang to say the BBC had received an Argentinian news agency report that the British Embassy in Montevideo had advised the British Hospital there to expect casualties. I said that no notification of this had been received but that we did have a case of mexical repatriation via the British hospital in Montevideo and this may have somehow been picked up. After consultation with the political section of Emergency Unit no action was taken on this rumour.

G. Situation of BAS Personnel and camera women on South Georgia

8. Whilst preparing prospective answers to possible supplementary questions for answer in the House of Commons today, I contacted the MOD who advised that the British forces are now in the process of contacting the BAS personnel and camera women in South Georgia.

26 April 1982



R. J. Austen

Consular Emergency Unit