AJC/TF

Mr Coles
Do we need to do more than ensure MOD take this on board and reply to that effect
TF
17/6

CHAIRMAN AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE
SIR JOHN CLARK

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The Rt Hon Mrs Margaret Thatcher MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
Whitehall
London

17 June 1982

Dear Prime Minister,

Please accept my warmest congratulations on your success in the Falklands. It has been an unparalleled combination of military skill and political resolution.

I suggest that we now need to show the same flair and imagination as the task force in the period of reconstruction ahead, and to marshal and deploy our national resources in a speedy and effective manner. Obviously one of the immediate essential tasks will be the rehabilitation and enlargement of the airport at Stanley, and here I think we can help.

One of our subsidiaries, Plessey Airports, is a specialist company providing complete airport facilities from design through to construction. It has done this, or is doing so, in countries as far apart as the Caribbean, West Africa and the Pacific. By an amazing coincidence it also happens to have as its Chief Engineer (civils) the man who designed and supervised the construction of Port Stanley Airport and the consulting engineers have access through him to all the previous Port Stanley survey and design work. In that context I enclose a short paper showing the relevance of all this to the Stanley requirement which we could take on forthwith.

Please forgive me for approaching you directly on this, but it has been difficult for us to identify which part of Government to approach in this connection, and I feel the matter is of such national interest as to justify my writing to you personally. We shall, of course, be happy to pursue more detailed discussions with any Minister or officials whom you care to name, with a view to bringing our expertise quickly to bear on this vital task. Meanwhile, I am sending copies of this letter to John Nott, Francis Pym and Lord Cockfield.

Sincerely

John Clark.

JAC/dls

Registered in England and Wales Number 203848 at Vicarage Lane, Ilford, Essex.

PLESSEY AIRPORTS LTD

Plessey Airports Ltd is a company that was formed within the Plessey Group to provide a total design and construct capability in airport work anywhere in the world.

The Group contains "inhouse" expertise in virtually every form of electronic, navaid, radar and communication system needed in airports. However, the range of disciplines involved in airfield planning and construction is substantially wider than is normally required in a purely electronic group of companies. To provide this total service, qualified staff with significant experience in civil works design and in construction management are part of the company's resources.

Plessey Airports has entered into contracts across the world and is currently operating in the Caribbean, West & Southern Africa and in the South Pacific.

The engineer who designed and supervised the construction of Port Stanley Airport is the Chief Engineer (civils) of the company ! Through his previous association with the consulting engineers, Rendel, Palmer & Tritton, Plessey Airports has access to all the previous Port Stanley Airport survey and design work.

It is believed that, for the foreseeable future, the Falkland Islands will need to be independent of supply from, or communication through, any part of Latin America including Chile. To provide an airport that will enable the above objective to be realised, the following factors are mentioned by way of example but not limitation.

(a) Substantial payloads flown in by C130, VC10 or B747 from Ascension Island will call for an extension of the Port Stanley runway from the present 4,100 ft to 10,000 ft. Previous surveys show this to be possible.

(b) Navigational Aids

Cloud Cover at Port Stanley can frequently be as low as 300 ft. Therefore, trans-ocean aircraft will require the assistance of navigational aids additional to those that were previously there. Specifically, an ILS and a VOR/DME,in addition to the previously existing NDB and VASI, will be needed.

(c) Fuel Storage

Aviation fuel facilities can be provided initially by using an oil tanker as a bunkering facility from which supplies can be pumped and then trucked by, say, three aircraft refuelling tankers to the airport. Storage, and an adequate road from the jetty to the airport is an obvious concomitant to this interim measure and settling tanks must be built.

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(d) Power Supply

The new airport buildings, the communication and navigational and airfield lighting systems must all be served by independent diesel generators. 3 x 250KVA and 1 x 30KVA (for off-peak running) are the forecastable need.

(e) Communications

If the operational criteria is to provide a high grade system for military as well as civil communications, a satellite communication circuit will be the best solution. We also recommend VHF ground to air communication with aircraft (250 mile range) and HF single side band air to ground communication with aircraft (long range). There will need to be point to point communication between Ascension Island and Port Stanley - an AFTN system is proposed. There should also be a radio relay link between Port Stanley airport and the town of Port Stanley to carry telephone and teletype services.

(f) Meteorological Station

The previous met. services will need to be up-graded. This can be achieved by introducing weather and wind-finding radars together with receiving equipment to access internationally maintained weather satellites.

(g) Fire & Rescue Equipment and other Group Equipment

This will have to match the size and scale of the larger aircraft which henceforth will be using Port Stanley airport. Materials handling facilities appropriate for large aircraft will also be needed to be introduced.

(h) Airport Buildings

Plessey Airports Limited would design and supply and erect all the necessary buildings for the airport, both in the context of short-term requirements and making due allowance for future development plans. It would provide its own accommodation requirements which will be of such a type that, upon completion of the works, they could be made available, if required, to the Islanders.

Plessey Airports Limited, in consultation with Rendel, Palmer & Tritton will, if required, not only design, supply and supervise the construction of all the airport and other airfield requirements, but also the associated infrastructure needs of the Falklands. The re-opening of the previously developed quarries will have to be part of the programme.

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Summary

Plessey Airports Limited have the necessary site data to commence immediately the design of a runway of appropriate length. Were the civils and building works to proceed through the conventional civil contractor/invitation to bid route, our experience is that the preliminary consultations would certainly take not less than four months. The rapid and more practical route would be to use the Royal Engineers to perform the civil works with Plessey Airports Limited acting as the specialist contractor and the co-ordinating body.