



CAP 17/5

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
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MO 5/21

17th May 1985

Dear Charles

DEFENCE SECRETARY'S SPEECH AT THE OPENING OF MOUNT
PLEASANT AIRPORT

Thank you for your letter of 13th May which I have shown to the Defence Secretary. The text of the Defence Secretary's speech was, of course, prepared in concert with the FCO and reflected previously agreed Government policy. It was not therefore considered necessary to circulate it for clearance at Ministerial level.

The Defence Secretary's speech was constructed with some care to address a number of audiences - those in the Falkland Islands, domestic and international opinion. The passages to which you drew attention need to be seen in this context.

- a. the passage on page 3 beginning "In the longer term" was intended to justify the considerable expense involved in the concentration of the garrison at Mount Pleasant by showing the possibility of consequential savings in the size of our stationed forces. It is not a new thought which will have come as a surprise to the Argentine Government. The reminder of our capability for rapid reinforcement is not helpful to them and the scope for garrison savings is in any case fully qualified by the next sentence of the speech. Argentine comment has, of course, been hostile to the Defence Secretary's speech.
- b. the phrase on page 2 about "the interests of all concerned" referred to Argentina as well as to the Falkland Islands. It would seem a pity to lose the thought in relation to Argentina. As to Falklands opinion, the phrase followed a previous sentence whose commitment to the Falkland Islanders could not be clearer. It is, moreover, clearly in the interests of the Islanders for relations to be normalised on the basis of Government policy and the Defence Secretary sees no reason why this should not be said.

C Powell Esq
No 10 Downing Street



I am copying this letter to Peter Ricketts (FCO).

Yours etc,

Richard Mottram

(R C MOTTRAM)

conqueror

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Argentina; Defense of Falklands Pt 14



17 MAY 1985



COMMUNICATIONS

17



10 DOWNING STREET

13 May 1985

From the Private Secretary

DEFENCE SECRETARY'S SPEECH AT THE OPENING
OF MOUNT PLEASANT AIRPORT

Your letter of 10 May to Peter Ricketts, which reached us here late on 10 May, enclosed a copy of a speech which the Defence Secretary proposed to make at the opening ceremony of the Mount Pleasant airport. The Prime Minister had already departed for the Scottish Party Conference and was therefore able to look at it only on Sunday. She would have wished two changes to be made:

(i) the passage beginning "in the longer term" on page 3 about reducing our forces should have been omitted. She does not think it a point to make right under the Argentine noses;

(ii) it would have been better not to tell the Falklanders that it is in their interests that normal relations with Argentina be restored. They may have different views. This would have meant omitting the phrase "which is also in the interests of all concerned, including those living here" on page 2.

I should be grateful if in future you could send out such texts in time for comments to be taken into account.

I am copying this letter to Peter Ricketts (Foreign and Commonwealth Office).

C D POWELL

Richard Mottram Esq
Ministry of Defence

Handwritten initials

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