

date: 5.4.82

Ministry of Defence have only confirmed that the Canberra liner has been requisitioned for troop carrying purposes and are refusing to be drawn on speculation that other ships (such as the Britannia) may follow suit.

The Canberra, media are being told, will be used for hospital purposes, troop accommodation, training, rest and recreation.

For operational purposes no details of troops being transported (numbers etc) are being given, or time of Canberra's departure (towards end of this week). Nor are they revealing what navel personnel may be on the ship. (The captain will in fact be the existing one who is former RNR).

MARINES

No confirmation yet on Argentine claim that they have captured the remaining 6 marines on Falkland. No word either on the 22 stationed on South Georgia.

The Falkland marines who have been safely returned to Britain have been dispersed on leave to their homes with firm instructions not to talk about their experience to the media.

GM

NOTE TO PRESS OFFICERS

Copy to all

FALKLAND ISLANDS SITREP

POB No 80

Diplomatic Activity

The general feeling at the moment is that we have achieved as much as we can in the United Nations arena. Sir Anthony Parsons has recommended that we would be advised to keep away from the Security Council until and unless we ourselves wish to de-escalate the situation by invoking UN peace-keeping machinery.

Line to take

We are very pleased with SCR 502. In the immediate future our diplomatic effort will be concentrated on our Community partners, NATO allies and other friendly governments to seek their support in bringing home to the Argentine Government the seriousness of their action. It is not appropriate to go into details at this stage.

International Court of Justice

If asked about the possibility of referring the dispute to the International Court of Justice you should say that Argentina has always in the past declined to submit its case to the ICJ and has always taken the line that it would not accept an ICJ ruling as binding.

Break in diplomatic relations

The Argentine Embassy has been given until midday on Thursday 8 April to pack and leave. The Argentines were a bit slow off the mark and have given our people in Buenos Aires until midday on 9 April to leave. Our interests will be represented by the Swiss Embassy in Buenos Aires. Theirs will be represented by the Brazilians here. It has been agreed that each interests section could have four diplomatic staff plus four support staff. A decision on whether the Argentine Consulates in Liverpool and Hong Kong are also to be closed has yet to be

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taken.

Chilean offers of assistance

The line to take is: 'We are not prepared to comment on military preparations or on any contact with individual countries which may form part of these preparations.' This line is of course good for questions about other countries as well.

Radio hams

Broadcasts by radio hams in the Falkland Islands have been picked up by hams in this country. Messages have been passed to the Foreign Office but we are not ourselves in direct contact with hams in the Falkland Islands.

New Zealand break in diplomatic relations

New Zealand has decided to break off relations with Argentina and has banned Argentine airlines from landing in New Zealand. Mr Muldoon has said in public that this action had not been taken at the request of the British Government.

Ascension Island press facilities

Refer to the Ministry of Defence.

The missing Marines

This is a matter for the Ministry of Defence. Unattributably we can say that the MOD are however declining to comment.

Red Cross

Please see the attached United Nations Department minute.

Peter Marshall

5 April 1982