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MONDAY 19TH APRIL 1982

PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE
~~FOR DEFENCE FOR THE ROYAL AIR FORCE~~
for Defence Procurement

MR STANLEY NEWENS (LAB/CO) (HARLOW)

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Mr Newens:

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will review the policy and practice of the Defence Sales Organisation with the aim of preventing arms sales to repressive regimes; and if he will make a statement.

A N S W E R

(Mr Geoffrey Pattie)

Arms sales policy towards individual countries is kept under continual review. All applications for the sale of arms are considered on their merits in the light of all relevant factors, including the nature of the regime.

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WEDNESDAY, 21ST APRIL 1982

MR. JOHN STOKES (CONSERVATIVE)(HALESOWEN AND STOURBRIDGE)

39 Mr. Stokes - To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what
W rate of local overseas allowance is payable to service personnel in the Falkland Islands task force; on what basis this rate is determined; and what indications were given to the personnel concerned about the rate of allowance that was likely to be paid.

A N S W E R

(Mr. Peter Blaker)

Local Overseas Allowance (LOA) is a tax-free allowance paid to members of the Armed Forces to meet the essential extra costs of serving overseas in normal conditions. It is not intended to compensate for arduous or dangerous conditions of service, which are factors taken into account in the assessment of Forces pay. The rate of LOA payable on any RN Ship is that appropriate to the last foreign port at which shore leave was taken. Under the usual rules those who sail from the UK (the majority of the present Task Force including soldiers embarked on troop ships) would have received no LOA at all; the minority who sailed from the Mediterranean or who happened to be able to take leave at Ascension Island would have received LOA of between £1 and about £5 a day.

To avoid the obvious unfairness of such a situation it was decided to pay a standard rate of LOA of £1 a day to all Service personnel in the Task Force. This is a rough average of what various Servicemen in the Force would otherwise have received. The objective was not to cut costs, and the overall cost of implementing the change is expected to be greater than the cost of applying the previous rules.

The Task Force was told of the standard rate on 16th April.

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WEDNESDAY, 21ST APRIL 1982

MR. DOUG HOYLE (LABOUR) (WARRINGTON)

31 W Mr. Hoyle - To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, why the 'Uganda', while it is part of the Falklands Expeditionary Force does not have an all British crew; why the necessary conversions to the structure of the 'Uganda' to make this possible were not carried out; and what will be the position of the Indian nationals on the 'Uganda' if hostilities break out.

A N S W E R

(Mr. Peter Blaker)

The P & O Liner UGANDA has been requisitioned solely as a hospital ship and has formally been declared as such. She thus enjoys protected status under the Geneva Conventions and none of her crew may be captured. A large proportion of UGANDA's regular crew is Asian and this will continue to be the case while she is operating as a hospital ship. All members of her crew are volunteers for this role. No conversion was necessary to the crew accommodation onboard the ship.

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WEDNESDAY 21ST APRIL 1982

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PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE
~~FOR DEFENCE FOR THE ROYAL AIR FORCE~~
for Defence Procurement

MR DOUG HOYLE (LABOUR) (WARRINGTON)

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W

Mr Hoyle:

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether any firms are still producing military equipment and spares to orders from the Argentine; and if he will give details of any such equipment or spares and indicate what is happening to finished items.

A N S W E R

(Mr Geoffrey Pattie)

All defence sales business with Argentina has been suspended and all export licences for military equipment and spares have been revoked. It is a matter for individual firms to decide whether or not to continue work on goods originally destined for the Argentine in the hope of finding an alternative market.

In view of the exceptional circumstances I informed the hon Members for Caernarvon and for Walsall North (Official Report 20 April Vol 22 Col 55) in general terms of the defence sales to Argentina since 1977. I do not however, propose, certainly during the present operation, to change the practice, upheld by successive Governments, of not disclosing details of individual defence sales.

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invasion, spares ordered direct from industry would not be monitored by MOD. Routine releases of naval spares were made from RN store depots on 19 February and 22 March but a request on 30 March to expedite delivery of further naval spares already on order was declined at official level.

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STATEMENT BY MOD SPOKESMAN 22.4.82 1200 HRS

"I have nothing more on the report side either of our Task Force or of their fleet that I can say. What I thought you might be interested in was that the Atlantic Conveyor is due to sail from Devonport tomorrow. You will remember she was being adapted to be used for ferrying aircraft down to the South Atlantic. Sea Harriers will be embarked from the start but the RAF GR3s will be staged out to allow time for training in their new role. Chinook helicopters will also be ferried down to the South Atlantic for use in the heavy lift role and I thought it might be useful if I just clear, in as far as a layman like myself can, that the use of this Conveyor differs from what is known as Project Arapaho in one main respect. Project Arapaho, which is an American project, envisage aircraft operating from container ships and using the tops of the containers as landing platforms. The Atlantic Conveyor will not operate the aircraft. Space has been made on her deck for aircraft take-off but not for operation. It is not an aircraft carrier in that sense from which the aircraft would operate.

The other piece of news I have is that I thought it would be useful to set out the exact position of the Norland. From the start we intended to embark stores and men onto the Norland at Hull but because of the strike there, which was quite unconnected with the Task Force, we had to consider the possibility of embarking the stores at either Southampton or Portsmouth. In the event, however, the dockers at Hull decided not to impede the embarkation of Norland in any way and it took place at Hull as originally planned and the Norland is now on her way to Portsmouth to be fitted out with the helicopter capability. When the fitting out is completed, and I don't at present have a date for that, she will join the Task Force. I thought it right just to put that on record because of the dockers' decision at Hull. Their strike did not impede the preparations for the Norland to join the Task Force".