

MO 5/21



Home Office

I would

to go should like the Duke of Kent
War Graves Commission. It would
be a great comfort to the
family. I agree that it is
Prime Minister should also go. For
reasons the Duke's attendance
must be kept secret until
he is within a few hours of
his visit.

- (a) whether the Royal Family should be involved in an event which may become the subject of international criticism
- (b) whether the Uruguayans will not feel utterly deceived by the promise suggested below.

2. I think we ought to examine carefully so that the visit is all the next of kin would wish.

3. The Foreign Secretary will be writing - await his reaction.

A.J.C. 11/3

VISIT OF NEXT OF KIN TO FALKLAND ISLANDS

You may wish to know that arrangements for the visit by next of kin to the Falklands in April are going well. Air transport to Montevideo and sea travel from there to the Falklands has all been laid on and we are now working on the details of the three day stay in the Islands and of the service of dedication.

2. The question now arises as to whether a member of the Royal Family should be present while the next of kin are on the Islands.

The Duke of Kent *

* would be particularly appropriate as he is the President of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and has close military associations. During his recent visit to the Falklands Mr Wiggin was given the clear impression by the Civil Commissioner and by the Commander, British Forces that the Duke's visit would be most welcome.

3. The Duke of Kent's presence will of course be subject to review nearer the time in the light of intelligence reports. We would propose to organize the visit on the same basis as your own visit, with awareness of it kept on a strict need-to-know basis, and with no formal announcement being made until the Duke had actually arrived in the Islands. It will be important to inform the Uruguayan authorities of the Duke's participation before it becomes public but not before the transfer of the next of kin from air to sea transport has taken place in Montevideo. The Uruguayan Foreign Minister's agreement to the transfer is an oral

* ~ * Passage deleted and closed, 40 years, under FOI Exemption. 1

Wayland
5 March 2013

SECRET



one and depends on the visit being kept as low key as possible. This consideration would be met if the Ambassador were instructed to inform the Uruguayans of the Duke's involvement after the sailing of the Cunard Countess and before the Duke's arrival in the Islands.

4. I have also been considering whether a Minister should also be present and I believe it would be appropriate for a Junior Minister from here to go. The Chief of the Defence Staff will also be in the Islands on a long-planned visit and will be able to represent the Services.

5. I know that the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary has been concerned that this visit should not have too high an international profile but I understand that he is content with these arrangements.

6. I should be grateful to have your agreement.

7. I am copying this to the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary.

WJH

Ministry of Defence
11th March 1983



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

16 March 1984

Visit of Next of Kin to the Falkland Islands

The Prime Minister has seen your Secretary of State's minute of 11 March and John Holmes' letter of the same date setting out the views of the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary on this matter.

She takes the view that, on balance, it would be better if the Duke of Kent did not visit the Falkland Islands on this occasion. Mrs Thatcher shares the concern of the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary that, if the event is given too high a profile the Uruguayans will be less inclined to cooperate with us over the Falkland Islands in the future. For the same reason, the Prime Minister would not want a Minister to accompany the next of kin. She notes that the Chief of the Defence Staff will be in the Islands anyway and will represent the services.

Mrs Thatcher has further said that she is sure it would be greatly appreciated by the next of kin if the Duke of Kent, in his capacity as President of the War Graves Commission, could receive them on their return, either on their arrival back in the UK or at some other suitable occasion.

I am copying this letter to John Holmes (Foreign and Commonwealth Office).

CLOSED UNDER THE
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION
ACT 2000

A. J. COLE

Richard Mottram, Esq.,
Ministry of Defence.

PRIME MINISTER

Visit of Next of Kin to the Falkland Islands

You have stated your views on this but I think you will wish to read the attached letter setting out Mr. Pym's views.

If the Duke of Kent and an MOD Minister go, we risk not being able to secure Uruguay's co-operation over the Falkland Islands in the future. They are co-operating with us this time because they have been told that it is a purely humanitarian occasion.

The best way of avoiding difficulties with the Uruguayans would be for the War Graves Commission to be represented by someone other than the Duke of Kent and for there to be no Minister present.

Do you wish ^{me} to confirm to those concerned that you want the Duke of Kent and an MOD Minister to go?

If that is the line judgment (and not just a line) then I have to agree. That I find it's embarrassing what the President of the War Graves Commission has to be excluded in Argentina? Surely there is no counterpart in Argentina? For the thinker if not H.R.H. who goes for the W.G.C.?

A.S.C.

14 March 1983



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

11 March, 1983

Dear John,

Visit of Next Kin to the Falkland Islands

Mr Heseltine's minute to the Prime Minister of 11 March says that the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary has been concerned that this visit should not have too high an international profile but that he is content with the arrangements as proposed. While it is true that Mr Pym would not wish in the last resort to stand in the way if the Duke of Kent is particularly anxious to go, he is increasingly concerned by recent evidence of the effect that Argentine pressure is having on the Uruguayans. The proposed Argentine next of kin visit on which I shall be writing separately is of course relevant. The presence of the Duke of Kent, particularly if he is accompanied by a junior Defence Minister, will give the next of kin visit a higher political profile. This will not help in international terms but more particularly is likely to have a damaging effect on general Uruguayan willingness to cooperate with us over the Falklands in the future.

Mr Pym's clear preference would be for the next of kin to be unaccompanied by high level Royal or political figures whose presence could be presented as adding a political element to what the Uruguayans have been told is a purely humanitarian occasion.

I am copying this to Richard Mottram (MOD).

Yours ever

(J E Holmes)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
Private Secretary
10 Downing Street