

Argentina

ES/ NO. 10. DOWNING STREET.

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DD UKMIS GENEVA 121200Z  
GRS 748

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DESKBY 121200Z

FM FCO 121050Z APR 83

TO IMMEDIATE UKMIS GENEVA

TELEGRAM NUMBER 90 OF 12 APRIL

YOUR TELNO 145 AND TELECON LONG/WESTBROOK: ARGENTINE NEXT OF  
KIN VISIT

p-a.  
AR 13/4.

1. PLEASE ENSURE THAT ALL DISCUSSION WITH ICRC OF DESTEFANIS'S RESPONSE IS AT THE HIGHEST POSSIBLE LEVEL. EITHER WHEN THEY CALL YOU IN TO GIVE THEIR PROMISED COMMENTS OR, IF YOU JUDGE IT APPROPRIATE, BEFORE, YOU SHOULD THANK THEM FOR SHOWING US SO QUICKLY THE TEXT OF DESTEFANIS'S ANSWER. FOR YOUR OWN INFORMATION HOWEVER, ICRC'S TRANSMISSION OF RESPONSE TO US WITHOUT COMMENT SUGGESTS A NEED TO STIFFEN THEIR RESOLVE, AND YOUR MAIN OBJECTIVE MUST BE TO GET THE ICRC MORE POSITIVELY ENGAGED IN THE EXERCISE. SHOULD IT BREAK DOWN, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO POINT OUT THAT SUCH A DECISION DERIVES FROM ICRC'S JUDGEMENT OF DESTEFANIS'S CREDENTIALS. YOU SHOULD THEREFORE POLITELY BUT FIRMLY REMIND THE ICRC THAT IT IS THEY WHO ARE IN NEGOTIATION WITH DESTEFANIS, NOT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT, AND THAT THEY HAVE FROM THE FIRST BEEN GENERALLY CONTENT WITH THE CONDITIONS WE HAVE PROPOSED. WE HOPE THE ICRC WILL SPEAK SHARPLY TO DESTEFANIS AND TELL HIM THAT IT IS THEY WHO ASSURE THE SECURITY OF THE OPERATION, AND THEY WHO WILL JUDGE WHETHER THE CONDITIONS ARE SATISFACTORY.

2. ON DETAILED POINTS IN DESTEFANIS'S RESPONSE, YOU MAY DRAW ON THE FOLLOWING:

A. WE IMAGINE THAT THE ICRC WILL AGREE WITH US THAT MUCH MORE IS NEEDED THAN A MERE PERSONAL ASSURANCE FROM DESTEFANIS OF THE HUMANITARIAN PURPOSE OF THE TRIP (HIS POINT 'B'). WE MUST RELY ON THE ICRC'S ASSESSMENT AND WOULD EXPECT THEM TO HAVE CONSULTED THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT ON THE POINT. WE ATTACH IMPORTANCE TO CONTACTS BETWEEN THE ICRC AND THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT. THE LATTER

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MUST NOT BE IN A POSITION TO DISAVOW RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE GROUP.

B. DESTEFANIS'S RESPONSE, ESPECIALLY POINT 'H', IS COUCHED IN TERMS THAT MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR US TO BELIEVE IN THE GENUINE HUMANITARIAN PURPOSES HE HIMSELF PROFESSES. WE REGARD THE REFERENCES TO THE SINKING OF THE BELGRANO, THE DEATH OF ARTUSO, AND THE ALLEGED ATTACK ON A HOSPITAL SHIP, AS INSULTING, AND IMAGINE ICRC MAY FEEL THE SAME. DESTEFANIS SEEMS TO BE MAKING POLITICAL CAPITAL OUT OF THE SORROW OF THE BEREAVED FAMILIES. THIS IS VERY MUCH AT ODDS WITH THE SINCERITY OF A DELEGATION FROM THE ASSOCIATION OF PARENTS AND RELATIVES OF SERVICEMEN MISSING IN THE FALKLANDS RECEIVED IN LONDON ON 7 APRIL. (THE LATTER VOLUNTEERED TO MR ONSLOW THAT THEY REGARDED DESTEFANIS'S ORGANISATION AS POLITICALLY MOTIVATED, AND SPECIFICALLY DISCLAIMED ANY CONNECTION WITH HIM).

C. DESTEFANIS'S POINT 'D'. AGAINST THE BACKGROUND THAT ARGENTINA HAS STILL TO DECLARE A DEFINITIVE END TO HOSTILITIES OR TO RENOUNCE THE USE OF FORCE, AND OUR CONSEQUENT NEED TO GUARANTEE THE SECURITY OF THE FALKLAND ISLANDS: AND BEARING IN MIND ISLANDER RELUCTANCE TO ACCEPT THE IDEA OF ARGENTINES VISITING THEIR LAND, THE ICRC WILL UNDERSTAND THAT WE SHOULD NOT BE EXPECTED TO ACCEPT AN ARGENTINE VESSEL, NOR AN ARGENTINE CREW.

D. AS FAR AS THE PRESS IS CONCERNED, INSISTENCE ON THEIR PRESENCE ONLY INCREASES OUR UNEASE THAT DESTEFANIS IS ENGAGED IN A POLITICAL EXERCISE. THE VISIT IS FOR HUMANITARIAN REASONS ONLY AND WE EXPECT THIS POINT TO HAVE BEEN MADE CLEAR IN CONTACTS BETWEEN THE ICRC AND THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT WE RECOGNISE HOWEVER THAT THE ARGENTINE NEXT OF KIN WOULD NOT WISH THE OCCASION TO GO ENTIRELY UNRECORDED AND TO THAT END WE WOULD BE CONTENT FOR THE ICRC TO PROVIDE THE SERVICES OF A PHOTOGRAPHER. IF THIS WERE NOT POSSIBLE, WE WOULD BE PREPARED TO PROVIDE ONE OURSELVES.

E. DESTEFANIS'S POINT 'C'. WE BELIEVE THAT THE VISIT

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SHOULD BE CONFINED TO CLOSE RELATIVES OF THE DEAD.  
DESTEFANIS HIMSELF MAY NOT ACCOMPANY THE PARTY ASHORE.  
THE ICRC WILL NO DOUBT AGREE THAT BOTH OF US WILL NEED  
ADEQUATE TIME TO SCRUTINISE THE ARGENTINE LIST.

3. YOU SHOULD ASSURE THE ICRC THAT WE STAND BY OUR STATEMENT OF READINESS IN PRINCIPLE TO AUTHORISE A PURELY HUMANITARIAN VISIT BY CLOSE RELATIVES OF THE DEAD. PLEASE ALSO REMIND THEM THAT THE SAME STATEMENT RECALLED THE OFFER WHICH HAS BEEN MADE TO THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS TO RETURN TO ARGENTINA THE BODIES OF THEIR SERVICEMEN AT PRESENT BURIED ON THE FALKLAND ISLANDS. ACCEPTANCE OF THE OFFER WOULD REMOVE THE NEED FOR EXCHANGES SUCH AS THOSE OF THE ICRC WITH DESTEFANIS.

PYM

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