

VISIT BY MR RIDLEY TO THE FALKLAND ISLANDS: 22-29 NOVEMBER 1980

Direct contacts with Argentina (New York proposal)

Points to make

1. Convinced that these proposals agreed in New York talks would be helpful to Islanders. Represent sensible practical improvement in communications in order to solve everyday problems.
2. Understand Islander fears of increased Argentina involvement in their lives. But in the long run, increased contact with Argentina is only sensible way to proceed.
3. Glad to hear that there have been some contacts. Hope that these proved useful and that it will be possible to maintain and increase them.

3. However, Councillors subsequently concluded that this was dangerous ground. The Governor reported their deep-rooted suspicion of increased contacts and their reluctance to expose themselves to their constituents as supporters of such proposals. Councillor York, who originally suggested the idea in New York, failed to advance it with his colleagues. He thought that the Embassy's proposals restricted though they were, were too far. While Councillors did not, in principle, dissent from the usefulness of the proposals to solve day-to-day problems, they were unlikely to take any initiative to advance this.

4. There has, however, been some limited progress. In September, the Embassy arranged for Councillor Bowie to call on the Argentine Consulate to discuss possible purchases from Argentina. Two or three minor Argentine officials and businessmen who have visited the Islands recently have had informal discussions with FIG representatives. These contacts at least have served the purpose of showing the Argentines that we have not lost sight of the proposal. It cannot force Islanders to do more. Both the Governor and the Embassy in Buenos Aires will continue to prompt the Islanders to take advantage of this opening whenever issues arise on which direct contacts would appear helpful.

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Direct contacts with Argentina (New York proposals)Essential facts

1. The agreement at the New York talks to improve direct contacts between Islanders and Argentines in order to be able to solve practical problems more effectively seemed a welcome development. In May, the Embassy in Buenos Aires discussed the proposal with the MFA. Basically, the Embassy was to act as the agency to put Islanders in contact with the relevant Argentine authorities and vice versa, as the need arose. The Embassy would continue to be involved in such contacts in order to ensure their smooth running and that matters were not discussed which were more properly HMG's concern.
2. Mr Gozney outlined these proposals to Councillors when he visited the Islands in June. His visit showed that, while there was no lessening of the resentment felt towards the Argentines, there might be scope for expanding contacts on the line proposed.
3. However, Councillors subsequently concluded that this was dangerous ground. The Governor reported their deep-rooted suspicion of increased contacts and their reluctance to expose themselves to their constituents as supporters of such proposals. Councillor Monk, who originally suggested the idea in New York, failed to advance it with his colleagues. He thought that the Embassy's proposals restricted though they were, went too far. While Councillors did not, in principle, dissent from the usefulness of ad hoc contacts on day-to-day problems, they were unlikely to take any initiative to develop this.
4. There has, however, been some limited progress. In September, the Embassy arranged for Councillor Bowles to call on the Malvinas Department to discuss possible purchases from Argentina. Two or three minor Argentine officials and businessmen who have visited the Islands recently have had informal discussions with FIG representatives. These contacts at least have served the purpose of showing the Argentines that we have not lost sight of the proposal. We cannot force Islanders to do more. Both the Governor and the Embassy in Buenos Aires will continue to prompt the Islanders to take advantage of this opening whenever issues arise on which direct contacts would appear helpful.