

date: 13 April 1982

MOD Briefing on Falklands

These are attributable answers.

Questions to:  
Mr I Macdonald

FALKLANDS ISLANDS - PRESS BRIEFING 5 - TUESDAY 13 APRIL 1982 - ON THE RECORD  
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE/MAIN BUILDING/HISTORIC ROCK, 27

- Q. Have you any more information about the Royal Marines?
- A. No. The position remains the same, as yet we have no authoritative news. We have enlisted the help of the IRC.
- Q. Have you any information on the Argentinian Navy leaving port?
- A. No confirmation of that.
- Q. Have you any unconfirmed information?
- A. I have no report which I could give to you on the Argentinian Navy leaving port.
- Q. Are all but 2 vessels still in port?
- A. The latest reports I have show no significant change.
- Q. <sup>photograph of an</sup> The Argentinian corvette in the Channel between East and West Falklands, taken before the blockage came into being. Have you information that has confirmed that?
- A. I have no information that would confirm it.
- Q. Do you have any information about it at all.
- A. None that I can give you.
- Q. Can you say whether Canberra is still being shadowed by the Russians.
- A. No I can't.
- Q. When is the UGANDA going to reach Gibraltar?
- A. I know that every effort is being made to turn round at Naples. She should be arriving later this week.
- Q. When will she be joined by <sup>RN</sup> personnel?
- A. I cannot give you any idea of that at present.
- Q. Marines - complaints from families that they had heard nothing officially?
- A. My understanding is that the normal welfare facilities have taken place, representations have been made to the IRC. I have every reason to believe that the normal procedures are taking place.
- Q. The people we have been talking to, they have been unlucky?
- A. I would be very surprised if the RM weren't looking after their own. All the families have been contacted - we have no formal information to give.
- Q. What have the families been told?
- A. That is private.

- Q. Some have not been told anything?
- A. I think I can confirm that they all have been.
- Q. Do you think it is because the information is only given to the wife?
- A. It goes to the next of kin -
- Q. How many of these Marines are there?
- A. There have been various disputes - we have not gone into details for the public to.
- Q. What about the movements of the Brazilian Navy?
- A. No further than I talked about yesterday - that they were coming out of the harbour for an exercise.
- Q. Have you had any contact with the Brazilians about the exercise?
- A. Not to my knowledge.
- Q. Argentinians - number of marines on Island?
- A. We have of course made our own assessment but that remains our own.
- Q. Do you have any information to suggest that the USSR is supplying satellite information about the position of the British fleet?
- A. I have no information on that subject.
- Q. In port - could include the Falkland Islands?
- A. I would not go any further. There is no Argentinian Naval or Auxilliary ship at sea within the zone.
- Q. Yesterday you said within the zone, today you are saying at sea within the zone. Why did you not say that yesterday?
- A. There is no significant variation today from yesterday.
- Q. Why not drop the within at sea?
- A. I am happy to drop the within at sea.
- Q. You are dropping the words at sea today?
- A. Yes.

FALKLANDS - ATTRIBUTABLE EXPENDITURE TODAY

"The military preparations continue according to plan. In particular, the Maritime Exclusion Zone remains established. There are no reports of Argentinian Naval vessels or Auxiliaries within the MEZ."

Statement finishes.

*Jim Reed*

DPO(N)  
13.4.82 1300

*Case & Mc 10 + 1000 by phone 1300 13.4.82*

FALKLANDS USE OF DAKAR SENEGAL

BACKGROUND

A rumour is abroad that the Government are establishing a base/HQ at Dakar Senegal.

PR Line

There is no Headquarters at Dakar in Senegal. Dakar has been used in the past as a RAF staging post and there is a RAF liaison officer there.

If asked if Dakar is being used in the current operation the standard reply of not discussing operational movements must be used.

*Jim Reed*

DPO(N)  
13.4.82 1000

Source:  
DS8  
FRGO

PRESS LINE - STENA SEASPREAD

The diving support vessel STENA SEASPREAD has been requisitioned from her owners, Stena Atlantic of Aberdeen for use in the specialised support role of maintenance ship. She is a 9000 GRT vessel designed for North Sea operations and her rugged construction will be ideal for the South Atlantic. She will be manned by her normal civilian crew under a civilian captain; but an RN detachment will be carried. She is the most suitable vessel in the British merchant fleet for this specialised support role."

If pressed on her civilian diving support role:

She could be used for diving operations if required, but there are at present no plans to use here in this role.

Source:  
Winter DS5

DPO(N)  
13.4.82 1000

*Stu Reed*

SS UGANDA

BACKGROUND (Can be used)

The UGANDA is docking at Naples around 1500 today. The children on board will disembark and be flown back to the UK by 8 chartered planes.

It is not known whether there will be a press facility at Naples but in any case P&O should answer this.

The UGANDA will sail for Gibraltar where she will be prepared for use as a hospital ship. From Gibraltar she will join the task force at sea. No press facilities are being offered at Gibraltar though anyone who climbs the Rock can, of course, photograph her. All other details about crew and Captain will be dealt with by Mr Thomas Director of Information P&O Steam Navigation Company Limited on ~~248~~-8000.  
283

DPO(N)  
13.4.82 1100

Source:  
DS5

*Stu Reed*

*Captain Brian J Bc Biddick*

REQUISITIONING OF SHIPS - QUEEN'S ORDER IN COUNCIL

BACKGROUND

The Queen's Order in Council requisitioning ships refers to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty (who no longer exist) and the Lord High Admiral (who is now the Queen).

FR Line

\* The QOC was drafted at very short notice on a Sunday afternoon. Though it is true that the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty no longer exist nonetheless this does not alter the validity of the order. Also included in the order is the authority for the Secretary of State for Defence and, incidentally, the Ministry of Transport to requisition.

*Sui Reed.*

DPO(N)  
13.4.82 1100

Source:

Head of BS15L

*Ps. Roberts Hovman D of Transport,  
215 5061 (Marine Affairs) will  
cover Trade aspects such  
as insurance etc.*

FALKLAND ISLANDS REQUISITIONING OF SHIPS

As a precautionary measure, 4 trawlers (Northella, Farnella, Cordella and Junella) are being requisitioned to complement the Royal Navy's capability. The ships will be manned by RN personnel and are being fitted out at Rosyth this week. These deep water trawlers would be especially well suited to make the long journey to the Falklands and have very good sea-keeping qualities. Our own mine counter measure vessels are more suitable to their NATO role which involves their operating in our own waters.

The owners of these trawlers are J Marr of Hull.

*Sui Reed.*

DPO(N)  
13.4.82 1545