



10 DOWNING STREET

Mr G Mercer
5 Hebe Street
STANLEY

11th January 1982

The Prime Minister has asked me to thank you for your letter of 10 January.

Mrs Thatcher is always glad to receive the views of the people of the Falkland Islands. One of the principal purposes of her current visit was to see the situation for herself at first hand and to meet and talk to as many of the people as possible. She has much enjoyed doing this.

The Prime Minister has asked the Civil Commissioner to arrange for you to receive a more detailed reply to the points you make. She has noted the various problems you raise and has asked me to say that a number of them seem to her unavoidable in a situation where it has been necessary to build up the defences of the Islands with great speed in the interests of their people. She has been profoundly impressed by the professionalism and dedication of all involved in this task as well as the equally important task of civil rehabilitation. She has seen

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that the civil and military authorities are determined to overcome all the problems which inevitably arise and she is sure that in this they have the full support of the people.

A J Coles
Private Secretary

Realt

Please type for John Coler's signature.

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NR 11/11.

blind copy: Civil Commission,

Mrs Thatcher
140 Government House
Stanley

without prejudice

10/1/83
Silo Meyer
5 Hebel St.
Stanley

Dear Mrs. Thatcher,

I would like to thank you for coming to visit us so that a more personal show of appreciation could be made. I am glad you held the reins when the Argentines invaded for I feel you had the determination to cast our invaders. I have chosen this country as my home and am very grateful to you and the men who fought to free my home.

I realize you are exceptionally busy with much more important matters than the following. On their own the points I am about to raise are trivial, but since they are not on their own I wish to familiarize you with them.

I am grateful, very grateful, to the British for removing the occupying force we had to contend with. Unfortunately, if there is a complaint of any type about the military or their behavior it is thrown in ones face that "we should have left the Archies here." There is also the real fear of offending the British public, because quite a lot seems to hinge on their opinion and blessings.

Since the military might be the touchiest point

will start with it.

I thought the bringing in of 5 met. police was a bit much, but I was wrong. They are needed to make the civilian dealing with the law feel the man in front of him is unbogged towards civilians. My observations of the MP's, not all of course, is that civies are stopped going down a one-way street but military personnel are not. When a theft was reported the MP. taking my statement remarked in a sarcastic tone, "military person I suppose." Unfortunately, yes. There has been a marked increase in drunkenness, fights, and theft. The MP's do a job I would not like.

Referring to the law. A local shopkeeper had 3 video tapes confiscated. He has no complaint about that. I would like to know why he has no committee or standards he can refer to. His films were taken, but the military is bringing in and showing the exact same films without the threat of prosecution unlike the shopkeeper.

A big point, comparatively speaking, is the military presents in Stanley proper. I would like to get military occupied houses returned so we can house the civilians. We have always had 3 military personnel living with us, but its about time we had some time in the house to ourselves. When will we get our schools and hostels returned so the children

III

Stanley and the camp can resume the education in a better atmosphere and to a higher level. To clarify that, the military is occupying a part of the junior school, and the children in camp cannot get an education for the higher studies out there.

I realize the men must live somewhere and they will vacate these buildings as soon as the camp is built. The camp will be built outside of Stanley's city limits, just. If Stanley was a military target before, it sure is now.

My riddle for the past month has been: How Temporary is a Porta cabin with a concrete walk? Examples are F. log 60 sq, CRE works, and the ones by the hospital. I know they have permission from the owners of the property to site them there, at least they got it after they were there.

I would not be writing all of this, maybe some, to you, Mrs. Thatcher, if there was a liaison office where the civilians could inquire or complain.

I am sorry but I must continue.

The bomb boys have done and are doing a great job. They have cleared lots of peat banks so the islanders can once again cut fuel without blowing themselves up. Why couldn't the powers that be locate the ammo dump on waste ground instead of a cleared peat bog?

I come to the two or three questions that you might find relevant. First, is the extent of the firing ranges.

Looking at the maps, the ranges appear to cover half of the Falklands. I realize this is a perfect place and opportunity for training. Will it continue to this extent? Will the number of troops stay around the number now here? The £35 million for the new airport? Is it R.A.F. starting or another?

It may appear that I am picking on the military. I am not concerned with them only. Time is getting short so I will consolidate a bit.

I am glad there are more teachers coming, we need them but where will they live?

Who promises the people coming down here all of the perks and the standards we offer never seem to meet the ones they were led to expect.

I wonder how a loan can be given priority for a person to buy a house for a business location and others can't get a loan to buy the house to live in.

How many of the new houses Brewsters is building will have locals living in them?

How did Brewsters get the contract to build these houses over a more experienced firm?

How did the Naffi get two prime sites in town? A lease on the Kelper store when all the locals, me too, that on no account will the building be leased or rented.

I have heard a lot about the gifts being sent for the Falklanders. Is there any monitoring on this? Where are the gifts sent to Co-op, F.I.C., and F.I.G. for distribution?

V

What happened to the money given? What about the furniture sent by the people of Stowe last July? I know there is some of the rum + cider given for liberation celebrations in the bond, where's the rest?

No, I don't want any farms broken into smaller units unless they are not being farmed. If the farms are broken up will the workers be given any form of guarantee of employment?

I realize there should be a memorial for those that died to free us. Why something so pretentious, expensive, and ugly? A simple memorial designed, built locally, of local materials would I feel be more appropriate.

I will stop now. I realize I should refer all or most of these questions and complaints to local government. Some I have with no results. I am writing to you, Mrs. Thatcher, to voice my opinions to another authority with the hopes of some results. I also wondered if you knew about any of this. And most of all in the Falklands, we are close enough to know each other, and everything is much more personal here (another reason why I love it). Thank you for reading this and I will wish you all the best and may God bless you.

With respect,
Peter Spencer