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28 April 1982

CABINET

DEFENCE AND OVERSEAS POLICY (OFFICIAL) COMMITTEE
SUB-COMMITTEE ON THE SOUTH ATLANTIC AND THE FALKLAND ISLANDS

ARGENTINIANS: VISA POLICY

Note by the Home Office

The attached note describes the policy, approved by the Home Secretary, adopted on the issue of visas to Argentinians seeking entry to the United Kingdom.

Home Office

28 April 1982

CONFIDENTIAL

ARGENTINIANS: VISA POLICY

1. Following the Argentine Republic's suspension of the 1967 Visa Abolition Agreement on 8 April, a visa requirement was imposed on Argentinians seeking to come to the United Kingdom with effect from noon on 9 April. Applications for visas may be made at any British visa issuing office overseas. The British Interests Section of the Swiss Embassy at Buenos Aires are accepting applications only in urgent compassionate cases. Posts have instructions to refer all applications to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (MVD).
2. The following paragraphs summarise the policy on the issue of visas which has been adopted.

Argentinians Returning to the United Kingdom

3. Failing a marked deterioration in the situation, we are not making things difficult for individual Argentinians who have existing leave to remain in the United Kingdom but who have temporarily left the country and now wish to return. Apart from the fact that many are returning residents or have other equally close links with the UK, while the presence of others such as work permit holders is presumed to benefit the UK economy, to do otherwise would be inconsistent with our current policy of dealing with applications for extension of stay from Argentinians already in the country under the Immigration Rules as normal.
4. Such applications when received are referred to interested departments as necessary. Those from Argentinians holding work permits will be referred to the Security Service (at their request). Referral will involve a delay which will be kept to the minimum.
5. Consistent with this policy the Passport Office is issuing re-entry visas to Argentinians (after consultation with the FCO who will clear any doubtful applications with the Security Service and the Home Office where appropriate). Re-entry visas will be given for single journeys only.

Applications from Argentinians who do not already have leave to remain here

6. These will be passed on the Home Office for consideration after copying as necessary to the Security Service and other interested departments. The applications will be held on file unless there are strong compassionate

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features or other considerations which make it in the public interest to grant a visa. Unless the situation changes we propose to take no further action for another two weeks or so; but meanwhile we shall consider the best way to handle them if refusal is then appropriate.

7. Special considerations apply where an application is likely to generate public interest, for example, visits by prominent sportsmen. Each application is being dealt with on its merits and other departments will be consulted where appropriate. Where necessary Ministers will be consulted before a final decision is taken.

Other Considerations

8. The general consideration which lies behind this policy is that while we wish to discourage Argentinians with no previous connection with this country from coming here we wish to avoid doing anything which might prompt the Argentinians to take reprisals against British residents in the Argentine Republic. Contingency planning is continuing on measures to require Argentinians in this country to register with the police, to curtail their leave to remain here, and, in the last resort to expel them.

Home Office
22 April 1982

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