

SECRET
C. S. O.

DEF/FID/7#3

0 8 3 8 / A

0

8

3

8

/

A

(Formerly)

92/45

SUBJECT :

FALKLAND ISLANDS DEFENCE FORCE.

Compulsory training in

CONNECTED FILES.

NUMBER AND YEAR.

0838	Falkland Islands Defence Force.
92/45	Reversion of F.I.D.F. to Peace Time Establishment.
0206	Appointment of Officers in F.I.D.F.
1/32	Commissions in "
73/45	" " "

29
|

26th April, 1948

Dear Lloyd,

I wrote to you in December about the possibility of introducing compulsory territorial service in Stanley (it would not be practicable to impose it elsewhere in the Colony) and wonder if you are yet in a position to give me the Secretary of State's views on this proposal.

We take in recruits for the Defence Force once a year, just before the training season commences, and this year not one has come forward while a number of men (time expired) have gone out on to the Reserve. The effective strength is now down to 50.

I have been thinking, also, about the defence situation generally which has thus far been considered only from the aspect of a major war and without reference to the possibility of a 'coup' from the Argentine. That may be very far-fetched; I simply don't know because I see no intelligence reports here. But I would not have supposed it to be beyond the bounds of possibility, particularly if we became involved elsewhere or if the internal situation at home were to worsen.

In such a contingency (however remote) we are at present as near defenceless as makes no matter; we have, at the most generous estimate, two platoons of partly trained infantrymen, two old six inch guns (with 1908 barrels), two four inch, two six pounders and two three pounders all "in preservation" and with no-one who knows how to handle them.

I would suggest that consideration be given to scrapping all these ancient pieces, installing four 4.5 inch dual purpose guns and turning the present infantry unit into a Coastal and Air Defence unit which would be far more effective from a defence point of view and might even rekindle interest. We would, of course, require an instructor.

Received from 29 in 0109/18

Sir Thomas Lloyd. KCMG.
The Colonial Office
Church House. London. SW. 1.

C.S.

f.i. and return; please despatch original at back cover.

MC. 26. iv

526

3/2

YE

29 read. I agree.

2. Letter to S. T. Lloyd has gone.

by
20.4

Note.

Discussed 29 with Cdr. Forbes (at request of CMC/AWI); Forbes has written a brief appreciation of which he is to send me a copy. On receipt I will further address S.A.S.

me 30.
14

31 in 0109/B

SECRET



CS

To see repeat of
conscience. Mc 5/1x

3

Colonial Office,
The Church House,
Great Smith Street,
S.W.1.

14881/48.

19th June, 1948.

Secret

My dear Clifford.

I am writing in Lloyd's absence in reply to your letters of the 8th December, and the 26th April, about the future of the Falkland Islands Defence Force and the possibility of introducing compulsory territorial service in Stanley.

We are very sorry that your two letters have gone so long without an answer, but there has been a good deal of difficulty over the question of conscription. The Secretary of State is anxious that all possible steps should be taken to encourage the formation and development of such forces, and has, in fact, addressed most Colonial Governments asking them to consider what can be done to this end. The enclosed draft savingram had been prepared for issue to you, but has been held up while your proposal for applying conscription in Stanley was further considered.

As you know, the question of conscription has certain political aspects in this country, and there is no intention of applying it as a general policy for Colonial territories. This might not rule out its being considered in particular territories where special considerations apply, although as a matter of fact, apart from your proposal, the only other territories where it has been mentioned are Kenya, in the case of the European population, and possibly in Bermuda.

The Secretary of State would like, however, before considering the case of the Falkland Islands, to have more detailed information than is available to us at the moment. He feels that we ought to be clearer, at any rate than we are in our own minds at present, that it will be practicable for conscripts to be properly trained and handled, and how the arrangements would work, and what effect it would have on the economy of the territory. He has also asked whether the failure of voluntary recruitment must be accepted as proof that people are really indifferent, or whether further appeals and publicity would be likely to have any effect. The possible political repercussions in South America of applying conscription would also have to be very carefully considered, and I need hardly add that in any case it would be necessary to avoid saying anything which might be regarded as provocative to the Argentine or Chile, or as suggesting that we envisage any possibility of hostilities with those countries.

In the circumstances we feel that the best course would now be to hold the matter over for discussion during your visit to the United Kingdom this summer, when no doubt you will be able to give us full information about the numbers of men likely to be involved, the adequacy of existing

training

Miles Clifford, Esq., CMG., OBE.

4

training facilities, the financial aspects and any other relevant considerations. We should then, no doubt be able to arrange for discussions with the defence authorities while you are here, and see what we could do to help towards converting the present unit and re-equipping it as a coastal or defence unit, as you have suggested. Perhaps you will also have been able to sound unofficial opinion as to the likely reaction to a proposal for conscription if that should be decided upon.

Your sincerely,

J.M. Martin

(J.M. Martin)

copy-

5

DRAFT SAVINGRAM.

To: The Governor, Falkland Islands.

NO..... SECRET.

I have recently had under review the position in regard to forces in Colonial territories analogous to the Territorial forces in this country. In general I consider that in Colonies where there are at present no such forces their formation should be encouraged, and that in Colonies, such as the Falkland Islands, where they already exist, all possible steps should be taken to maintain a high level of strength and efficiency. Apart from their purely military aspects such forces have, I feel, a substantial value as a means of providing opportunities for public service which would not otherwise be available, of encouraging local patriotism and of developing a sense of corporate responsibility.

2. In the Paper on "The Role of the Colonies in War", a copy of which has been sent to you, it is recommended that the Falkland Islands should provide forces to man the Coast Artillery Armament and for protection against raiding parties on a Home Guard basis. But there is no reason why such forces should not be organised on the ordinary Territorial Force model. It is, I feel, particularly desirable owing to its geographical position that the Colony should be in a position in an emergency to provide from its own resources the largest possible forces of trained men for these purposes, and this suggests that, in view of its limited population, all fit men should as far as possible be enrolled

/in...

4

in the force in peace time.

3. I shall be glad if you will review the position of the Falkland Islands Defence Force in the light of these considerations and furnish me with any recommendations you may have to make for improvement on the lines indicated above. If there are any directions in which the War Office could assist I should be glad to approach them and I am assured of their co-operation, provided that no expense falls on War Office funds.

10