

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 02 October 2014 20:04  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** British Embassy Buenos Aires

[REDACTED],

We spoke a short while ago. By way of this message you have my e-mail contact details. My mobile (calling from a UK phone) is [REDACTED].

As I said, we're here to help if you need. Our consular correspondent in [REDACTED], [REDACTED], is copied into this email also – and is on mobile [REDACTED]/ home: [REDACTED] (calling from within Argentina). [REDACTED] is of course best placed to provide immediate assistance on the ground.

You confirmed the following:

- You are part of a crew of 37 who were filming in Tierra del Fuego for Top Gear
- A third of you (including the presenters) are now in Ushuaia airport due to catch a flight up to Buenos Aires in two hours time
- The rest of your group are in eight vehicles currently travelling towards the border with Chile, with Argentine police protection provided until you cross the border
- This follows a day of protests during your filming in Tierra del Fuego by “Malvinas” veterans groups which became threatening and resulted in the local authorities asking you to leave the province without any negotiation.

You have confirmed that you do not believe any of your group are in physical danger.

Please don't hesitate to contact [REDACTED] and myself if that assessment changes.

And if you wish to meet us tomorrow in the British Embassy Buenos Aires to discuss this further, we are of course ready to assist: the Embassy is at Luis Agote 2412 in La Recoleta.

Safe journey up to Buenos Aires, and take care of yourselves.

[REDACTED] | [REDACTED] | British Embassy, Buenos Aires | Email: [REDACTED] | Telephone: [REDACTED]  
|

Más información: [www.gov.uk/world/argentina](http://www.gov.uk/world/argentina)    [twitter.com/ukinargentina](https://twitter.com/ukinargentina)

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 02 October 2014 20:08  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: British Embassy Buenos Aires

[REDACTED],

Many thanks indeed for standing ready to assist. As I said on the phone just now, I don't think that is currently necessary – but please don't hesitate to contact me if you get a call from [REDACTED] of the BBC in the next couple of hours.

[REDACTED]: to see where we have got to with this potential consular case. No further consular action required on the ground at this moment. I am also copying to [REDACTED] in Santiago to be aware.

[REDACTED]

**From:** [REDACTED]

**Sent:** 03 October 2014 00:17

**To:** Global Response Centre (Sensitive)

**Cc:** John Freeman (Sensitive); [REDACTED] Kate Smith (Sensitive); Archie Young (Sensitive); [REDACTED]

**Subject:** British Embassy Buenos Aires: Top Gear [REDACTED]

[REDACTED],

Thank you for updating me earlier on your phone calls with Top Gear personnel here in Argentina. I have since been in touch with them directly, and the email at the bottom of this chain gives you an update on where things are. It does not appear that the group is in physical danger any more – but it has split into two and left Ushuaia in the far south of Argentina a hurry. We will of course let you know if this situation changes.

More broadly – and for tomorrow morning – Top Gear have of course, [REDACTED]. We would recommend that FCO colleagues contact the BBC on Friday morning including to request an update of the itinerary of the Top Gear team during the rest of their time in Argentina.

We think it would also be pertinent to alert Minister Swire's office; and – in the likelihood of media interest locally – we would be grateful for advice on press lines to take.

I'm therefore copying this email reasonably widely to colleagues in Americas Directorate, OTD and Press Office, as well as here within the Embassy.

[REDACTED] | [REDACTED] | British Embassy, Buenos Aires | Email: [REDACTED] | Telephone: [REDACTED] |  
Más información: [www.gov.uk/world/argentina](http://www.gov.uk/world/argentina) [twitter.com/ukinargentina](https://twitter.com/ukinargentina)

**From:** Global Response Centre (Sensitive)

**Sent:** Friday, October 03, 2014 12:47 AM

**To:** [REDACTED]; Global Response Centre (Sensitive)

**Cc:** John Freeman (Sensitive); [REDACTED] Kate Smith (Sensitive); Archie Young (Sensitive); [REDACTED] PS Minister Swire - Info (Sensitive); Newsdesk (Sensitive); [REDACTED]

**Subject:** RE: British Embassy Buenos Aires: Top Gear [REDACTED]

[REDACTED],

Many thanks to you and colleagues for taking this forward this evening. It's good to know the situation seems a little less fraught than earlier. The team also knows how to contact us should you need to switch off your mobile.

Press Office and South America Department will be able to provide you with some press lines in time for your start of business on Friday.

Thanks again for your help this evening,  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] | FCO Global Response Centre | Foreign and Commonwealth Office | Room K.3.30H, King Charles Street | London SW1A 2AH | ✉ Email: [Response@fco.gov.uk](mailto:Response@fco.gov.uk) ☎ Telephone: 020 7008 1500 📞 ECHO: 808 3350 🌐 url: [www.gov.uk/fco](http://www.gov.uk/fco)

**From:** [REDACTED]

**Sent:** Friday, October 03, 2014 07:52 AM

**To:** John Freeman (Sensitive); Global Response Centre (Sensitive); [REDACTED]

**Cc:** [REDACTED] Kate Smith (Sensitive); Archie Young (Sensitive); [REDACTED] PS Minister Swire - Info (Sensitive); Newsdesk (Sensitive); [REDACTED]

**Subject:** Re: British Embassy Buenos Aires: Top Gear OFFICIAL\_SENSITIVE

CLASSIFICATION:[REDACTED]

[REDACTED],

Thanks for this, I'll call [REDACTED] this morning.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] | Press and Digital Department | Foreign and Commonwealth Office | London | SW1A 2AH | email: [REDACTED] | Tel: [REDACTED] | Mob: [REDACTED] | FTN: [REDACTED] | <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/foreign-commonwealth-office>

Follow the Foreign Secretary on twitter and facebook

**From:** Archie Young (Sensitive)

**Sent:** 03 October 2014 12:02

**To:** John Freeman (Sensitive); [REDACTED] Global Response Centre (Sensitive); [REDACTED]

**Cc:** [REDACTED] Kate Smith (Sensitive); [REDACTED] Newsdesk (Sensitive); [REDACTED] Fiona Clouder (Sensitive); [REDACTED]

**Subject:** RE: British Embassy Buenos Aires: Top Gear [REDACTED]

John,

Can I echo your thanks to GRC and Post for all the work on this to date.

You'll see we've agreed very standard lines for now but agree we will need to review them along the lines you suggest as more information comes to light.

I think we should have a conference call on this in a few hours to ensure we're all in the same place. **[REDACTED] – can you liaise with [REDACTED] & [REDACTED] and arrange please?** Hopefully the situation on the ground (in terms of crossing the border) will be resolved imminently but there will be a lot of work on press handling etc to follow.

Thanks again,

Archie

**Archie Young** | Deputy Director Americas & Head of South America Department | G38  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office | Old Admiralty Building | London SW1A 2PA

✉ Email: [archie.young@fco.gov.uk](mailto:archie.young@fco.gov.uk) | ☎ Tel 020 7008 2218 | 📠 FTN 8008 2218 | 📠 Fax 020 7008 2476 | 🌐 [www.gov.uk/fco](http://www.gov.uk/fco)

**From:** John Freeman (Sensitive)

**Sent:** 03 October 2014 12:34

**To:** Archie Young (Sensitive); [REDACTED]; Global Response Centre (Sensitive); [REDACTED]

**Cc:** [REDACTED] Kate Smith (Sensitive); John Derrick (Sensitive); [REDACTED] Newsdesk (Sensitive); [REDACTED] Fiona Clouder (Sensitive); [REDACTED]

**Subject:** Re: British Embassy Buenos Aires: Top Gear [REDACTED]

CLASSIFICATION:[REDACTED]

Archie

Thanks. We of course will be ready to join in a VTC later as and when you wish.

I have just had a word with [REDACTED] and at my request he will now ring his BBC team contact (the person he was in contact with yesterday evening) and as well as inquiring how things are (hopefully they should be crossing the border now) will give them [REDACTED]'s tel contact number in Santiago (and alert [REDACTED] to that). [REDACTED] will also touch base with [REDACTED] (our Consular correspondent in [REDACTED]) in case [REDACTED] has any news/background.

I understood yesterday evening that though the bulk of the TGear team should be crossing over the border, some of them are coming up to BsAs preliminary to flying out. We will be in touch with them today if we can reach them.

John

**From:** Global Response Centre (Sensitive)

**Sent:** Friday, October 03, 2014 12:38 PM

**To:** John Freeman (Sensitive); Archie Young (Sensitive); [REDACTED] Global Response Centre (Sensitive); [REDACTED]

**Cc:** [REDACTED] Kate Smith (Sensitive); [REDACTED] Newsdesk (Sensitive); [REDACTED] Fiona Clouder (Sensitive); [REDACTED]

**Subject:** RE: British Embassy Buenos Aires: Top Gear [REDACTED]

John,

I've just spoken to [REDACTED] and told [REDACTED] the latest following my call with the BBC ten minutes ago.

They told me that they still haven't been able to cross the border and need our assistance with the authorities. I agreed with [REDACTED] we'd wait until [REDACTED] gets in to the office at 0900am and see if the situation has resolved itself which we think it will and if not, [REDACTED] would talk with [REDACTED] about possible next steps and speaking with Embassy contacts.

Regards

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] | [REDACTED] | Global Response Centre | K.3.30H | King Charles Street | London SW1A 2AH | ✉ email: [REDACTED] | ☎ telephone: +44 (0)20 7008 1500 | 📠 fax: +44 (0)20 7008 3823 | 🌐 ftn: 8008 1500

**From:** John Freeman (Sensitive)

**Sent:** 03 October 2014 12:46

**To:** Global Response Centre (Sensitive); Archie Young (Sensitive); [REDACTED]

**Cc:** [REDACTED] Kate Smith (Sensitive); [REDACTED] Newsdesk (Sensitive); [REDACTED] Fiona Clouder (Sensitive); [REDACTED]

**Subject:** Re: British Embassy Buenos Aires: Top Gear [REDACTED]

CLASSIFICATION:[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Thanks for all your work on this.

Separately, as you may have seen from my email to Archie Y of ten mins ago, [REDACTED] ([REDACTED]) will be speaking to his BBC contact in Argentina in the next half hour. [REDACTED] will report on that conversation in due course.

John

**From:** [REDACTED]

**Sent:** 03 October 2014 09:08

**To:** Global Response Centre (Sensitive); Archie Young (Sensitive); [REDACTED]

**Cc:** [REDACTED] Kate Smith (Sensitive); [REDACTED] Newsdesk (Sensitive); [REDACTED] Fiona Clouder (Sensitive); [REDACTED]

**Subject:** RE: British Embassy Buenos Aires: Top Gear [REDACTED]

All

Grateful if [REDACTED] and I could be copied into ongoing correspondence.

Depending on the outcome of [REDACTED]'s phone call with the BBC, [REDACTED] and I are keen to ensure that we've done everything we can politically to ease their crossing.

Once they have successfully crossed the border, we also think it would be worthwhile for the Ambassador in Santiago to call the crew to acknowledge he's aware of the difficulties they've experienced and offer up a meeting with them if they are passing through Santiago.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED], [REDACTED] Consular Directorate | WH4.9 | Foreign & Commonwealth Office, London SW1A 2AH  
Email:[REDACTED] | Tel: [REDACTED] | [www.gov.uk/fco](http://www.gov.uk/fco)  
Follow FCO consular sites on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)

**From:** Archie Young (Sensitive)

**Sent:** 03 October 2014 13:58

**To:** Fiona Clouder (Sensitive); [REDACTED] John Freeman (Sensitive); [REDACTED] Global Response Centre (Sensitive); [REDACTED]

**Cc:** [REDACTED] Kate Smith (Sensitive); [REDACTED] Newsdesk (Sensitive); [REDACTED]

**Subject:** RE: VTC with BA: Top Gear [REDACTED]

All,

Thanks to OTD for letting us join their discussion. For those dialling in shortly, proposed agenda as follows:

1. Update on latest situation regarding location, health and intentions of TG team
2. Update on latest media response in Arg & Chile
3. Update on latest media response in UK
4. Agree approach for handling media in Arg & Chile
5. Agree approach for handling media in UK
6. Agree approach for interaction with TG team
7. Agree roles going forward (inc weekend)

Probably won't be as smooth as that but hope that's a helpful starter.

Archie

**From:** Aurea Steelman (Sensitive)

**Sent:** 03 October 2014 14:09

**To:** [REDACTED] Archie Young (Sensitive); Fiona Clouder (Sensitive); John Freeman (Sensitive); [REDACTED] Global Response Centre (Sensitive); [REDACTED]

**Cc:** [REDACTED] Kate Smith (Sensitive); [REDACTED]

**Subject:** RE: VTC with BA: Top Gear [REDACTED]

Dear All,

Further to our VTC today on Top Gear, here is a record with action points from the meeting. Apologies to Archie and Mal for the technical difficulties. Please chip in if I've missed anything. Those present were:-

BE Buenos Aires  
OTD  
UK Media Office  
SAmD

Consular

### 1. Situation Update

Further to the latest sitrep from BA, we understand the group travelling by road are in the process of crossing the border. The other smaller part of the group who flew to BA, are now at the airport and will be leaving on the British Airways flight today back to London. This part of the group included the Jeremy Clarkson and the other presenters.

Best wishes  
Aurea

[REDACTED] | [REDACTED] | South America Department | G38 Old Admiralty Building | Foreign & Commonwealth Office | London SW1A 2PA | ✉ email: [REDACTED] | ☎ telephone: [REDACTED] | 📠 ftn: [REDACTED] | 📱 Mobile: [REDACTED] | 📠 fax: [REDACTED] | 🌐 website: [www.gov.uk/fco](http://www.gov.uk/fco)

**From:** [REDACTED]

**Sent:** Friday, October 03, 2014 02:23 PM

**To:** [REDACTED] John Freeman (Sensitive); Global Response Centre (Sensitive)

**Cc:** [REDACTED] Kate Smith (Sensitive); Archie Young (Sensitive); [REDACTED] Newsdesk (Sensitive); [REDACTED] SOSFA Action (Sensitive); DL OOH Buenos Aires; DL OOH Santiago; [REDACTED] Fiona Clouder (Sensitive); [REDACTED] Archie Young (Sensitive); [REDACTED]

**Subject:** Top Gear Argentina / British Embassy Buenos Aires SITREP 10:20 Friday 3 October

## SITUATION UPDATE

One Top Gear group in Buenos Aires, flying out on British Airways flight at 13h00.

Second group still in Argentina in Tierra del Fuego province, at border crossing "Bellavista" with Chile.

Local police Gendarmerie confirmed at 09:20 with Embassy that this border is normally closed and that they will be opening it up specially for this group. He confirmed the Immigration Team should be getting there at around 10:00 – he said there is no way of speeding this but reassured that it was all being coordinated and that the group are safe. The roads are blocked and there is no way for others to get to the border and that they will keep it that way until the group crosses over, he added.

Embassy Consular Team is in direct contact with Top Gear group at the border. DHM is in direct contact with Top Gear producer in Buenos Aires. Consular Correspondent [REDACTED] is in [REDACTED] ([REDACTED] previously met the group at their local hotel before departure from [REDACTED], but did not accompany them towards the border crossing), liaising with local authorities including police and border crossing officials.

## BRITISH NATIONALS

27 members of Top Gear team are in Tierra del Fuego, in eight vehicles. No confirmation of names/nationalities but assumed to be all British.

## ISSUES OF CONCERN

Physical safety of group in Tierra del Fuego. Group was attacked in the middle of the night by a mob of around 100 at Tolhuin in Tierra del Fuego, hurling stones. Windows were broken and minor injuries were sustained from broken glass. There is a doctor with the group who administered first aid. Local police providing protection to the group and it now appears safe from protestors.

Onward progress of group once it passes into Chile. Top Gear are considering chartering a plane to fly them out from the "Pamba Huanco" airfield 10km from the border crossing. We have passed Chile consular contacts onto the group; our Honorary Consul in [REDACTED] is aware of the situation and ready to provide consular assistance if it should be required.

## POST OPERATIONS

HMA John Freeman crisis leader ([REDACTED]) and DHM Crisis manager ([REDACTED]); mobile [REDACTED]).

[REDACTED] and [REDACTED] providing direct consular support. [REDACTED]. All on the Global Address List.

[REDACTED] Consular Correspondent [REDACTED] assisting on the ground in [REDACTED]; mobile [REDACTED] and email [REDACTED]

## PRESS INTEREST AND LINES

There is press interest from a range of media outlets, both Argentine local and UK. No press queries yet received directly in the Embassy. No press interest on the Chilean side yet. We will send an Embassy press update later in the day, if required.

Current press lines are:

On the filming schedule and / or controversial number plate:

This is a matter for the BBC.

If asked:

The BBC is entirely independent of government and their filming schedule is a matter for them.

On the incident:

We are aware of an incident involving British nationals in Argentina and are providing consular assistance.

## NEXT STEPS



We will ring the Gendarmerie around 10:30 again – hopefully to confirm whether the group in Tierra del Fuego had already crossed into Chile.

VTC with London colleagues, likely to be at 12:00 local time (16:00 London time). In advance we will contact once again Top Gear producer (via DHM); Top Gear team at Border Crossing (via [REDACTED]) and our [REDACTED] Consular Correspondent.

[REDACTED] | [REDACTED] | British Embassy, Buenos Aires | Email: [REDACTED] | Telephone: [REDACTED]  
|  
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**From:** Global Response Centre (Sensitive)  
**Sent:** Sunday, October 05, 2014 06:26 PM  
**To:** Fiona Clouder (Sensitive); [REDACTED] John Freeman (Sensitive); [REDACTED] Global Response Centre (Sensitive)  
**Cc:** [REDACTED] Archie Young (Sensitive); Newsdesk (Sensitive)  
**Subject:** FW: Top Gear Star Cars in Argentina

**Buenos Aires colleagues** – We had a call from one of the Top Gear producers, [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] wanted our advice on how they might be able to recover the 3 star cars and camera equipment that are currently impounded in Rio Grande.

They have a number of concerns (I've highlighted below), and while the company rep has said [REDACTED] is willing to go recover the cars – there is concern over [REDACTED] safety should [REDACTED] do so. They are also concerned how much help or assistance the police may provide. I have said I'm not sure there is any better alternatives we can offer, other than possibly using any contacts within the Police, but promised to send on to you for any thoughts.

The cars themselves are not such a concern and they would leave them, however the very large bond against the cars (£1m) means they are keen to recover the cars equipment if at all possible.

Grateful for any advice and if someone can contact [REDACTED] to pass on.

Regards  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] | [REDACTED] | Global Response Centre | Foreign and Commonwealth Office | London | **Tel:** [REDACTED] | **FTN:** [REDACTED] | **email:** [REDACTED]

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 05 October 2014 16:54  
**To:** Global Response Centre (Sensitive)  
**Subject:** Top Gear Star Cars in Argentina

Dear [REDACTED],

REDACTED]

Many thanks,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
BBC Top Gear  
[REDACTED]

**From:** John Freeman (Sensitive)  
**Sent:** 05 October 2014 18:46  
**To:** Global Response Centre (Sensitive); Fiona Clouder (Sensitive); [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** [REDACTED] Archie Young (Sensitive); Newsdesk (Sensitive)  
**Subject:** Re: Top Gear Star Cars in Argentina [REDACTED]

CLASSIFICATION:[REDACTED]

For [REDACTED]:

The Embassy team will consider and get back to your contact. But this may not be easy and quite obviously it is not something this Embassy could itself effect directly. I will inquire of our consular team what we would normally do regarding lost or impounded goods (eg we may suggest a list of lawyers the BBC could consult and ask to act). Also relevant here could be whether the BBC team had Argentine agents (or is the "company rep" you refer to an Argentine anyway?) for the Top Gear programme who could make approaches on their behalf.

Anyway, we will consider and offer early advice to [REDACTED]. Whether we can do so today depends on how quickly I can run this in front of our team this (Sunday) evening; I suspect we may not be able to reach a considered view till early tomorrow. Pl let [REDACTED] know we will get back to [REDACTED] as soon as possible. The link contact in the Embassy will continue to be my [REDACTED].

For [REDACTED]: pl give me a ring. I have not been able to access more than two paras of [REDACTED]'s email (second below) on my blackberry.

John,

HMA, Buenos Aires

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 06 October 2014 17:47  
**To:** John Freeman (Sensitive)  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]; DL BAires - Foreign Policy Team (Sensitive); [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** [REDACTED] Top Gear Argentina / British Embassy Buenos Aires SITREP 13:45 Monday 6 October

## SITUATION UPDATE

Both Top Gear groups left Argentina on Friday 3 October, leaving three vehicles abandoned in Tierra del Fuego.

Media coverage both locally and in the UK, throughout the weekend.

Sunday 5 October: Top Gear [REDACTED] contacted the Global Response Centre regarding the recovery of the 3 vehicles in country. [REDACTED] wrote the following: [REDACTED]

DHM followed up by contacting [REDACTED] direct on 5 October to clarify that Top Gear was seeking the FCO's advice on how to recover the three vehicles; and to request contact details of their local agent/representative for DHM to contact on Monday.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

DHM inquired if Top Gear/CARS had a lawyer locally. [REDACTED] said [REDACTED] was not aware of any, but [REDACTED] would ask the question of Top Gear direct. [REDACTED] requested that DHM call [REDACTED] again later on 6 October with any update/advice to offer. DHM sent a holding reply at 13:30.

#### NEXT STEPS

1. [REDACTED]
2. I will need to follow up my holding reply to [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], with a full reply in due course (GRC previously told [REDACTED] that we would try and reply during the course of Monday). I would propose we include a list of lawyers and consular contact details we hold for Ushuaia. What if any advice could we offer on the physical safety of those charged with recovery of the three vehicles?

[REDACTED] | [REDACTED] | British Embassy, Buenos Aires | Email: [\[REDACTED\]](#)  
| Telephone: [REDACTED] |

Más información: [www.gov.uk/world/argentina](http://www.gov.uk/world/argentina)      [twitter.com/ukinargentina](https://twitter.com/ukinargentina)

**From:** Kate Smith (Sensitive)

**Sent:** 07 October 2014 08:24

**To:** John Freeman (Sensitive); Archie Young (Sensitive)

**Cc:** [REDACTED] Sarah MacIntosh (Sensitive); [REDACTED] DL BAires - Foreign Policy Team (Sensitive); [REDACTED]

**Subject:** RE: ARGENTINA: TOP GEAR EPISODE: REFLECTIONS, PROSPECTS and RISKS [REDACTED]

John

Thanks for this very helpful note. My immediate instinct is the same as yours, to offer the recovery team no more help than you would any other British national in a similar position, but to stay in close touch with them (REDACTED).

K

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 07 October 2014 12:25  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** John Freeman (Sensitive); [REDACTED] Archie Young (Sensitive); [REDACTED] Kate Smith (Sensitive)  
**Subject:** RE: ARGENTINA: TOP GEAR EPISODE: REFLECTIONS, PROSPECTS and RISKS [REDACTED]

[REDACTED],

Many thanks for the update. Two thoughts from me:

- [REDACTED]
- Travel Advice. There is an argument not to change; degree of relevance to ordinary travellers and any change could be picked up by the press negatively (stable door / horse bolted). But there is also a strong argument for line explaining to travellers that this is a real and sensitive issue particularly in areas such as Tierra del Fuego and we can make it factual and related to recent events.

[REDACTED]



[REDACTED] | [REDACTED]

✉ email: [REDACTED] 📞 mobile: [REDACTED] 📠 ftn: [REDACTED]

Follow us @fcotravel on twitter and [www.facebook.com/travelSouthAmerica](http://www.facebook.com/travelSouthAmerica)

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 07 October 2014 12:29  
**To:** [REDACTED] John Freeman (Sensitive)  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Argentina/Top Gear: draft email message from me to Top Gear assistant producer and CARS UK. Comments in next couple of hours please

[REDACTED] and [REDACTED],

I have drafted below a reply to [REDACTED], which I also intend to copy to Top Gear [REDACTED].

I'd grateful for any comments you might have in the next couple of hours. I am also copying to be [REDACTED] and Consular Directorate colleagues in the region and in London; again, comments by 18h00 UK time (14:00 local time) would be welcome. I ought to issue this reply today, if at all possible.

To note that I have removed from the [REDACTED] list, the details of our Consular Correspondent or of the French Honorary Consul locally – so that the list is restricted to local authorities.

Thanks in advance,

[REDACTED]

---

Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you again for your telephone call yesterday. I promised to follow up with more considered advice, which I am also copying to [REDACTED] given the BBC's lead role in the Top Gear incident here, and [REDACTED]'s contact with the FCO over the weekend.

[REDACTED]

I am also providing a list of contact details that we hold for local authorities in Ushuaia, which we are sharing as we would normally do with British nationals who seek our advice on consular or other matters.

I know from [REDACTED]'s email to the FCO of 5 October, and our own telephone conversation, [REDACTED]. I would like to point you to the FCO's travel advice for Argentina, which covers safety matters as well as Falklands sensitivities, and can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/argentina>

Please do keep in touch and let us know how you get on.

Yours,

**From:** [REDACTED]

**Sent:** Thursday, October 09, 2014 05:54 PM

**To:** John Freeman (Sensitive)

**Cc:** Kate Smith (Sensitive); Archie Young (Sensitive); [REDACTED] PS Minister Swire - Info (Sensitive)

**Subject:** Argentina / Top Gear [REDACTED]

John,

I just took a call from Top Gear [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] said [REDACTED] was calling to seek my private advice on a number of options the BBC was considering, for the recovery of their 3 vehicles in country. I said that I was happy to listen (comment: as per my earlier message inviting the BBC to keep me updated), but that I would probably not be able to offer more advice above and beyond the email I sent to [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] on Tuesday.

[REDACTED] outlined the options the BBC was now considering:

- [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] added that, if the BBC / their agents were to travel to Argentina in due course, they would want some sort of assurance that their personal safety would be guaranteed.

My main points in response were:

- i) I encouraged [REDACTED] to speak to a lawyer locally
- ii) I asked [REDACTED] if [REDACTED] had opened a channel of dialogue with the Argentine Embassy in London. [REDACTED] said Top Gear had previously been in touch with an Embassy employee called [REDACTED]
- iii) I said that the only authorities who might be able to provide a safety guarantee to the BBC/their agents were the Argentine authorities – and I had no idea how such a guarantee could be agreed in practice

I also said to [REDACTED] that, given that we were essentially now dealing with a case of the retrieval of private property, there would be real limitations to what assistance the Embassy could give. I added that any request by the BBC for the Embassy to act above and beyond those limitations would have to be put in writing to the Foreign Office. [REDACTED] hinted that the BBC was now discussing internally whether to involve their Director-General directly, in discussing this matter with the FCO.

## COMMENT

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] | [REDACTED] | British Embassy, Buenos Aires | Email: [REDACTED] | Telephone: [REDACTED] |  
Más información: [www.gov.uk/world/argentina](http://www.gov.uk/world/argentina) [twitter.com/ukinargentina](https://twitter.com/ukinargentina)

**From:** [REDACTED]

**Sent:** 10 October 2014 13:25

**To:** [REDACTED]

**Cc:** [REDACTED]

**Subject:** Introduction

Dear [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

My phone number is [REDACTED].

I very much look forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] | [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

☎: [REDACTED]



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**From:** [REDACTED]

**Sent:** 10 October 2014 14:49

**To:** John Freeman (Sensitive)

**Cc:** Kate Smith (Sensitive); Archie Young (Sensitive); [REDACTED] PS Minister Swire - Info (Sensitive); John Freeman (Sensitive)

**Subject:** Top Gear/legal advice [REDACTED]

John,

I have received a further message from the BBC today – as per below – this time from the legal side. [REDACTED] also left a phone message shortly before emailing.

I recommend I send a short message to [REDACTED] today to:

- confirm receipt of the email
- inform [REDACTED] that Monday is a public holiday here
- welcome [REDACTED] having instructed an Argentine lawyer (comment: [REDACTED])
- remind [REDACTED] that it is [REDACTED] lawyers who will need to provide [REDACTED] with legal advice – the Embassy has no legal expertise regarding Argentine law.

Does that sound right?

Beyond, that I am not familiar myself with notary/legalisation policy and the role of the FCO/Embassies with regards to that. I'd be grateful for advice from consular colleagues, as appropriate.

Thanks,

[REDACTED]

**From:** [REDACTED]

**Sent:** 21 November 2014 13:09

**To:** [REDACTED]

**Cc:** [REDACTED]

**Subject:** BBC Top Gear

**Importance:** High

Dear [REDACTED],

I just tried your line but as advised on the automated greeting I am sending an email.

[REDACTED]

Please do call or email at anytime at all including over the weekend, my number is [REDACTED].

I will very much look forward to hearing from you.

Best Wishes,

[REDACTED]

**[REDACTED] | [REDACTED]**

 [REDACTED]

 [\[REDACTED\]](#)

 [REDACTED]

**From:** [REDACTED]

**Sent:** Friday, November 21, 2014 04:39 PM

**To:** Kate Smith (Sensitive); Archie Young (Sensitive); [REDACTED] PS Minister Swire - Info (Sensitive); [REDACTED] John Freeman (Sensitive); [REDACTED]

**Subject:** Argentina/BBC Top Gear: retrieval of vehicles

Colleagues,

Interesting that BBC/Top Gear have got back in touch with me today regarding the retrieval of their vehicles – [REDACTED].

I propose responding to the email below by:

- thanking the BBC for keeping us informed
- pointing them to our travel advice, including the language on Falklands sensitivities
- offering myself as a contact point over the coming days and providing my mobile number in case of any out of hours incidents.

Does that sound right? I will wait an hour – until 17h30 UK time – in case any of you wish to respond on the substance.

[REDACTED] – I don't propose we tip off our Consular Correspondent in [REDACTED] at this stage.

Do you agree? We can always involve [REDACTED] at a later stage, should the need arise.

Thanks,

[REDACTED]

**From:** John Freeman (Sensitive)

**Sent:** Friday, November 21, 2014 05:47 PM

**To:** [REDACTED] Kate Smith (Sensitive); Archie Young (Sensitive); [REDACTED] PS Minister Swire - Info (Sensitive); [REDACTED]

**Subject:** Re: Argentina/BBC Top Gear: retrieval of vehicles [REDACTED]

CLASSIFICATION:[REDACTED]



[REDACTED]

Thanks. Sounds sensible.

John

**From:** [REDACTED]

**Sent:** 21 November 2014 21:13

**To:** John Freeman (Sensitive); [REDACTED] Kate Smith (Sensitive); Archie Young (Sensitive); [REDACTED] PS Minister Swire - Info (Sensitive); [REDACTED]

**Subject:** Re: Argentina/BBC Top Gear: retrieval of vehicles [REDACTED]

CLASSIFICATION:[REDACTED]

John, [REDACTED],

The BBC contacted Mr. Swire directly to relay the same message. I told him that they had been in touch with you and that you would reply on behalf of the FCO.

[REDACTED]

**From:** [REDACTED]

**Sent:** 29 December 2014 16:47

**To:** [REDACTED] Kate Smith (Sensitive); John Freeman (Sensitive); [REDACTED]

**Cc:** Fiona Clouder (Sensitive); [REDACTED]

**Subject:** RE: Argentina: Top Gear and other media stories [REDACTED]

Kate,

[REDACTED]

Thanks,

[REDACTED]

**How do you respond to claims that the BBC's Top Gear edition from Argentina was inappropriate?**

This is a matter for the BBC.

*If asked:*

The BBC is entirely independent of government and their programme content is a matter for them.

**Did you help them to make the programme?**

No.

**Did you assist them in any way?**

We provided consular support to the team as they prepared to leave Argentina.

**What did it cost the FCO to get Top Gear out?**

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office did not incur any costs in providing assistance to the Top Gear team. The consular support provided to the Top Gear Team was covered by existing Foreign & Commonwealth Office resources without incurring any additional costs.

[REDACTED]