

SUBJECT
CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER AND MR. HAIG - WEDNESDAY,
14 APRIL, 1982 AT 2000 HOURS

PM: I am coming back to one thing immediately after having a moment to have a look at the notes I made and a quick discussion with Francis. I think that parts of your statement will cause an extremely adverse reaction here and also they are contradictory. I refer to those ^{parts} which said towards the end that from the outset you had not accede to requests that would go beyond the scope of the pattern of co-operation, and then you went on to say that the use of Ascension had been restricted accordingly. First they are mutually contradictory I think - if you have not acceded to requests beyond the scope of the customary pattern you don't need to restrict them. Secondly, there will be a feeling that you are deliberately making it difficult for us, because when the Argentines are apparently getting very considerable help from the Soviets. Thirdly, and I must be quite blunt about it, it's been said in the House - and quite rightly - that I have done everything possible to support President Reagan and the US Government on every single occasion they have asked for help, and the moment we need your help you aren't there, we just don't receive it. And I do therefore feel that this statement will be received very badly here. Can you at least say nothing about the use of Ascension Island?

Haig: Well we can of course because as you know there is a great deal being done. The problem is that this is a serious problem there - the fuel and other things - which I said are totally consistent with our Treaty obligations and I said we simply must do that.

PM: I don't think you have to - because it's our island and that will be the reaction of British people. It's our island and the dispute is about our islands, and I can only tell you that I think this statement as it is drafted will give rise to very considerable criticism to put it very mildly here, for the simple reason that they will say the Prime Minister has stood by the President and look what's happened now. And it would be justified.

/Haig:

Haig: ... we can't pull back because we have normal patterns and we are completing them.

PM: I don't like the phrase "you have not acceded to requests beyond the scope of the customary pattern" because it looks as if we have made them and you have turned them down. Can you not say therefore the operation continues within the scope of the customary pattern of operation?

Haig: The difficulty is that I don't know whether you have seen what these very mischievous press reports have alleged, and they are having a major crisis in Argentina right now. I told them that, if they asked, we would turn them down - if you asked while this negotiation was under way we would have to refrain as well. Now I think, if you read that language. Let me read it again. It implies that we have perhaps approaches from either side.

PM: Well, that really, too, would cause trouble here because we know, we get reports every day in our press and media, although we don't get hysterical about them, that the Soviets are helping the Argentines very considerably.

Haig: But they have denied that vigorously officially.

PM: Of course they will. And what does a Soviet denial mean?

Haig: No, I mean the Argentine have ..

PM: Well, course they have. But they've got, you know, the reports that you've received and you know the reports that we received. And the suggestion, you know, that we really are to be treated in the same way as a military junta, with no record whatsoever of human rights - indeed, a very bad record of human rights - I think will cause problems here. And I think if there's any feeling that you're trying to put the screws on us to make it difficult for us to liberate our Islands from the aggression of a military junta, who's in bed already with the Soviet Union and who's had a terrible record on human rights, would be received extremely badly here and would make it very difficult for us to continue the good relationships that have hitherto existed.

/Haig:

Haig: Well, I certainly understand the concern, and that's why I read this to you so you ...

PM: Well let's get Ascension Island out of it altogether, because it's our island.

Haig: I think that you must understand that we've taken on a terrible obligation here, which is not a comfortable one, but I think a necessary one. And we've even gone to the point where I know it's been very irritating when we've talked about even-handedness. It is not evenhandedness when we're talking about a different set of relationships all the time.

PM: It can't be evenhandedness. We both stand in NATO and we've both got obligations to one another, etc.

Haig: Well, we have, in my view, Prime Minister, about 48 or 72 hours to get this thing reasonably put together and right now we've got an ultimatum ...

PM: I know. What I'm saying, Al, is for Pete's sake, get that use of Ascension Island out of your statement, because it's our island and we can't exactly invade our island. You know, it's ours.

Haig: Of course not, and I will take that out.

PM: Right. Ascension out, and therefore you say: 'Do not accede to requests that would go beyond the scope of the customary pattern of cooperation' ..

Haig: Which is extremely expensive, as you know.

PM: Oh, indeed. That I think I can stand on.

Haig: I think the problem is if they thought we were doing something like this, I would no longer be welcome in any way. And I'm trying to keep them from going in the OAS, where we will have a total emotional North/South fragmentation on this issue.

/PM:

PM: Yes. All that I accept, but ..

Haig: That's the worst thing we can have happen.

PM: Yes. All that I accept, but I mean the OAS has had her claws in it which condemns totally aggression by any Member State. And if it doesn't condemn this, then they're all liable to have aggression by one State or another on their territory. And it's a beautiful treaty from that viewpoint. I don't know of any clause in the OAS which applauds a State for taking the territory of any other State by force.

Haig: That's absolutely right. But I don't have to tell you about how this thing will drift and it's only a two-thirds vote question, you see. Now, we would never go along with this in the first place. We don't think the OAS or the Rio Pact is even applicable in a case of aggression that has already occurred. So they cannot resort to that legally.

PM: Yes. They don't normally combine together to support aggression contrary to the United Nations Security Mandatory Resolution.

Haig: Well, we think we're on very sound ground there, while in practical terms, it could become very nasty and we could end up of course

PM: Yes. Now, listen, in the long run, the importance is that the United States and Europe, through us, sticks together, sticks together. I beg of you, therefore, do not do anything which raises anti-Americanism in this country just when we need help and understanding. I'm trying to understand your position. And particularly on our island, I'm trying to understand your position but you said you would keep the use of Ascension out of it and stick to this phrase that you've not accede to requests that would go beyond the scope of the customary pattern of cooperation, which between allies, of course, as we know, is very considerable. I'm sure my people will say 'Well, look, the Argentines are getting a lot of help from the Soviets, and yet we're not getting any help from our traditional allies'. Now,

/I'm

trying to hold with the past and say 'Look, they are trying to be of assistance in the negotiated solution and they're the only country which has enormous influence on the Argentine'. Then the next thing I will get is: 'Yes, they could, in fact, bring this dispute to an end perfectly easily if they're prepared to use their economic powers' and that's been said in the House this afternoon.

Haig: Well, that's absolutely right, too. And I think you see here, we say we'll continue our stand while our efforts are underway, and that makes it very clear.

PM: Yes, I agree. But we've not got to ^{go} beyond the scope of customary patterns of cooperation which, as we know, are very extensive.

Haig: Well, that's the idea. Incidentally, I'm sure you know there's going to be a lot of charges here at home. I can't apologise for our own press.

PM: No need to apologise for the press.

Haig: I don't mean to be cowardly, but this is going to be challenged as being dishonest by the State Department.

PM: Yes. I don't know how you cope with the press. I'm absolutely firm with them and I do not intend to have my policies and the future of the free world and islands and democracy and liberty, etc. etc. governed by the press. The press couldn't exist without the sort of things which you and I stand for. And I'm very

Haig: The damage done last night by the American press - I mean, the individuals involved in this - is almost fatal to the peace process and that's the great tragedy of this.

PM: Yes.

Haig: And I think we have to be guided by the best collective judgments we can apply. I'm afraid that this will be very weak
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from the Argentine point of view, not because they care about the realities but far more because they are faced with an upheaval at home, with which they cannot live. They may not permit me to come to that capital if we have not said something reassuring about this difficult issue.

PM: Yes. Well, I'm agreeing that you keep it beyond the scope of the customary pattern or cooperation. And I will have to look and see what that does to us because, as long as you keep in the words 'From the outset, you have not acceded to requests that would go beyond the scope of the customary pattern of cooperation' so there is no change?

Haig: That's correct.

PM: So there is no change at all. But I beg of you, don't go for Ascension Island. It's ours. I know it's your base, and I know we're governed by an agreement, and we honour that agreement, etc.,...

Haig: Well, I'll take that out then, Prime Minister and I will not let them reassert it. I have not talked to them about this statement.

PM: All right, Al. You got problems, we got problems. But above all, the United States and the UK have to stay together and I don't want things which jeopardise our long term cooperation against the real aggressor.

Haig: Well, you're absolutely right and we cannot permit that and will not.

PM: All right. Message received and understood. I made myself clear, did I?

Haig: Yes.

PM: OK, now. Good luck. Bless you, and thank you. Goodbye.