

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING

DATE, TIME Friday, April 30, 1982, 9:35 to 10:30 A.M.
AND PLACE: The Cabinet Room, The White House

SUBJECT: South Atlantic Crisis

PARTICIPANTS:

The President

State
Secretary Alexander M. Haig, Jr.
Assistant Secretary Thomas O. Enders

JCS
General David C. Jones

OSD
Secretary Caspar W. Weinberger
Deputy Secretary Frank C. Carlucci

White House
Mr. Edwin Meese III
Mr. Robert C. McFarlane
Mr. Richard G. Darman
Admiral John M. Poindexter

CIA
Deputy Director Bobby Ray Inman

NSC
Col. Michael O. Wheeler
Mr. Roger Fontaine
Mr. James Rentschler

OMB
Dr. William Schneider, Jr.

USUN
Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick

Minutes

Mr. McFarlane opened the meeting by observing that all parties to the Falkland Islands dispute had reached a watershed. The United States had solicited views from both sides and has made a proposal of its own. We have received responses to the proposal from both sides. It is now time to decide our next steps. Mr. McFarlane reviewed the agenda and then asked for an intelligence update from Admiral Inman, followed by a diplomatic and political review from Secretary Haig.

Admiral Inman reviewed the military situation by detailing first the disposition of British forces in the area. He said the major problem the British now face is making the airfield at Port Stanley inoperable, and he suggested how the British intend to do it. Admiral Inman noted that a large-scale landing is not imminent, but the British are prepared for the long haul. Nevertheless, distance and deteriorating weather will make the British position difficult even as they build up their forward base on Ascension.

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Admiral Inman then detailed the position of Argentine forces. Their plan is to stay out of the Military Exclusion Zone (MEZ) and keep their naval units protected by air cover. He also suggested the Soviets have placed in orbit a new ELINT satellite and that, coupled with TU-95s in Angola, could track the U.K. naval force. Meanwhile, the Argentine air force is positioned in its southern bases and it could be used in an attempted air strike on the fleet. As for the Argentine strength on the Falkland Islands, there are 7,000 to 8,000 troops, with the possibility of reaching full strength at 13,000. He also gave other details of the military buildup on the Islands, noting that the Argentines had no high performance aircraft on the Falklands now.

On the political side, Admiral Inman added that in the U.K. the Labour backbenchers support Prime Minister Thatcher, and her support in general is strong. In the absence of a diplomatic breakthrough, she will pursue military action beyond a blockade. Should Britain suffer heavy casualties, however, Mrs. Thatcher's support could crumble. In Argentina, President Galtieri's support is narrowing, and he has little room for maneuver, perhaps even less than Prime Minister Thatcher.

Secretary Haig then outlined the current diplomatic situation and what the United States proposes to do now. He began by describing the situation as tragic with both sides, similar to a demented man on a ledge ready to jump, reaching for help but unable to grab our hand. He then described the elements of the American plan which in effect would give ultimate sovereignty to Argentina but under evolutionary conditions which the Islanders could ultimately accept. Unfortunately, the Argentine government which is, in fact, made up of many moving and conflicting parts could not agree to the plan. In that sense, Argentina is the opposite of a pluralistic, democratic government where the lowest common denominator is consensus; in the Argentine case the lowest common denominator is extremism. The Navy holds the veto and is even more intransigent after losing South Georgia, whose Argentine garrison surrendered without firing a shot--a fact known to the Argentine government, but not to the Argentine people.

Our proposal, the Secretary affirmed, gave Argentina a great deal. It was very difficult for the British to consider, yet the Argentines turned it down. With that turndown may come fighting. Argentina may test the MEZ and although the British are not expected to take near-term action, they will if they are probed by Argentina--sea or air. That could happen today, because there are reports that cargo planes will come into the Falkland Islands with fighter cover.

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Despite this outlook, the Secretary said, we do not want to close the door on diplomacy. But there is a dilemma. There are growing pressures at home and abroad to support Britain. At the same time, we need to work with Argentina and keep the American community in Argentina protected. Moreover, if this pro-American government falls in Buenos Aires, it may well be replaced by a left-wing, Peronist regime. Therefore, the Secretary said, we need to be careful in how we raise our tilt. Mrs. Thatcher is reasonably satisfied with our position until now. She wants more than we can give, but she does understand the need for a negotiated solution.

The Secretary then said the President's letter to Mrs. Thatcher was a measured response to a brittle note from the Prime Minister. (She, in fact, was reacting to press reports that we were controlling her forces by having them slow down, reports which were not true.)

The Secretary then outlined the press statement prepared for an 11:30 a.m. release Friday, April 30, following the NSC meeting. He added that the Argentines will actively seek another resolution at the U.N. Security Council that goes beyond 502. The Secretary characterized as prudent the measures we will take today. Both the right and the left in this country want us to take stronger measures against the Argentines. But even what we do today will cause great resentment in Argentina. Stronger measures like default are, however, out of the question. Our interests will be best served by keeping up pressure on Argentina to meet its international commitments.

At this point, Secretary Haig passed out copies of the revised press statement for NSC principals' consideration.

Mr. McFarlane then asked for comments or questions.

Secretary Weinberger commented on evacuation plans. In a benign environment it would be simple and quick. If hostile, there is little we could do. As for our naval forces, it would take at least 15 days steaming time for the Eisenhower, now in Tunis, to reach the South Atlantic from the Mediterranean--the minimum cover we could provide.

Mr. Meese asked about protection for the embassy.

Secretary Weinberger said sensitive material has been removed and our diplomatic personnel are Argentina's responsibility, noting there was not much we could do short of a full-scale invasion. Secretary Weinberger then asked Secretary Haig to indicate the changes in the revised press statement.

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Secretary Haig said there were no significant ones except more accurately describing the Argentine position, listing the U.K. position, and giving a longer account of the American plan without going into detail.

In response to a question from Admiral Inman on providing U.S. military aid to the U.K., Secretary Weinberger said that nothing was pending but believed more fuel would be requested for Ascension, plus ground support on Ascension and perhaps more specialized ammunition.

Mr. Carlucci questioned the paragraph that mentioned communist subversion of the hemisphere. It is certainly true, but he suggested that the perception would be that the U.S. is interested in Latin America only when there is a communist threat.

Secretary Haig agreed with that comment. The original statement went much further on this aspect. On balance we need a reference to it. It is the minimum we can say. Further, it serves as a warning to the Argentines about Soviet intentions.

Mr. McFarlane informed the NSC meeting that he had been in touch with Judge Clark by phone, whose judicial eye had drawn attention to the paragraph in the draft statement dealing with the question of force. The Judge suggested that, drawing on the experience we had with our own Revolution, we be careful about how we characterize the use of force--there is a distinction between "lawful" and "unlawful" use.

Mr. Carlucci then asked if our contemplated actions were being communicated to the Argentines.

Secretary Haig said our ambassador told Galtieri what we would do, but Galtieri is not a free man.

Ambassador Kirkpatrick said there will be movement at the U.N. soon. The Secretary General is intensely interested in this question. He is sensitive to his diplomatic limitations as a Latin and a Peruvian. His first choice as a special mediator would be Aga Khan, a man of no national identity who is nevertheless widely respected. Ambassador Kirkpatrick is convinced the Argentines are now interested in the U.N. and will accept a U.N. initiative. Argentines, she added, respond negatively to pressure. They won't really go to war because they're not ready to. Therefore, they will accept a U.N. move. The U.N. too will work better than in most cases because it is an issue that breaks the usual pattern of U.N. politics. This will also be hard for the British to turn down because this time the U.N. will be evenhanded.

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Secretary Haig added that until now, we had wanted to avoid the U.N. Now it is different. He added that the Argentines have always suspected us of being on the side of the British. Our imperative has always been to get a settlement. The Argentine strategy is to string out the process and hope the weather will prevent the British from taking action. Meanwhile, their position remains rigid. Their final offer, if accepted by the British, would cause Mrs. Thatcher's fall. Our proposals, in fact, are a camouflaged transfer of sovereignty, and the Argentine foreign minister knows this, but the junta will not accept it.

At this point there was a general discussion of the specific economic and other sanctions to be applied to Argentina, reflected in the agreed upon press statement.

The President interjected that he had no objection to giving materiel support but wondered if that would not significantly undercut any future role for the U.S. as mediator.

Secretary Haig observed the Argentines have been told what we would do if they refused this offer. They must not think they can play with us. Meanwhile, we have a problem in Britain and with our other allies. The popular perception is that we are too neutral, too tepid.

Secretary Weinberger said we need to come out of this getting credit for something; we need to get credit for our support of the British.

Secretary Haig said that the President will not have a problem with the materiel assistance paragraph; the real problem with the Argentines will be the sanctions--that will be politically tough.

Admiral Inman emphasized that one sour note had come out of recent developments, namely, press leaks about the U.S. ability to read Argentine military communications, which in turn have led to a changing of the Argentine cipher. Admiral Inman hoped we would soon be able to regain our capability in that area, but the leaks had been damaging.

Then ensued a general discussion of how we would explain our new position to the press. Secretary Haig then added, if this gets rougher, the British will want more from us.

Ambassador Kirkpatrick said it won't go that far. The Argentines will find a way to avoid war through a face-saving device in some forum perhaps by the weekend.

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Secretary Haig said that unless Argentina softens on sovereignty, the British will go ahead and do some damage.

The President concluded the meeting approving the specific actions outlined in the press statement and noting that it would be nice if, after all these years, the U.N. could accomplish something as constructive as averting war between the U.K. and Argentina.

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

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WITHDRAWAL SHEET

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Collection Name EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT, NSC: MEETING FILE

Withdrawer

DLB 5/25/2006

File Folder NSC 00048 04/30/1982 [FALKLAND ISLANDS]

FOIA

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COLLINS,
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ID	Doc Type	Document Description	No of	Doc Date	Restrictions
24877	LIST	MEETING PARTICIPANTS AND INFORMATION PAR 1/22/2007 F02-059; UPHELD 6/3/2010 M08-201 #24877	1	4/29/1982	B3
24878	PAPER	NEXT STEPS ON FALKLANDS R 6/29/2007 NLRRF02-059	4	4/29/1982	B1
24879	CHART	PRESSURE POINTS R 6/29/2007 NLRRF02-059	4	ND	B1
24880	PAPER	POSSIBLE FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS R 6/29/2007 NLRRF02-059	2	4/28/1982	B1
24881	PAPER	CONTINGENCY PLANNING R 6/29/2007 NLRRF02-059	1	ND	B1
24882	PAPER	FINANCIAL SITUATION R 6/29/2007 NLRRF02-059	3	4/29/1982	B1
24883	PAPER	OPTIONS FOR US PAR 6/3/2010 M201/1	2	ND	B1
24884	MINUTES	NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING - SOUTH ATLANTIC CRISIS R 5/9/2011 M201/1	6	4/30/1982	B1
24885	NOTES	DRAFT MINUTES FOR #24884 R 5/9/2011 M201/1	6	4/30/1982	B1

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

- B-1 National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA]
- B-2 Release would disclose internal personnel rules and practices of an agency [(b)(2) of the FOIA]
- B-3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(b)(3) of the FOIA]
- B-4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential or financial information [(b)(4) of the FOIA]
- B-6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(b)(6) of the FOIA]
- B-7 Release would disclose information compiled for law enforcement purposes [(b)(7) of the FOIA]
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- B-9 Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]

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ISC

1/30/81

all hands

Bud: watershed - agenda

no &
sure
and

930

Tom Erman: CIA update - UK forces update - appear to be preparing for the long haul - will be hard to maintain supply line
- update Argentine forces & plans - Soviet satellite launch
- discuss assessment of ~~the~~ English & Argentine intentions: Thatcher determined / Galtiere's options reasonable, must get concurrence on decisions from even 2nd-level commanders - no happy news

Bud: Sec Haig

Haig: analogy to person outledge threatening to jump - Argentines want clear expression of sovereignty at outset - now faced w/ action, perhaps as early as today - regardless of what happens militarily, it's essential we have a settlement... whatever we do, it's important we not close the door on diplomacy - threat to Americans there - alternative to this regime could be a leftist govt - Mrs. Thatcher is reasonably satisfied w/ American position - propose to make a press statement at 11:30 this morning including - ... (Haig passes out press statement)

Bud: comments

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DECLASSIFIED
NLRR M08-201 # 24885
BY RW NARA DATE 5/9/11

Weinberger: evacuation in benign environment rather easy;
in hostile environment, very difficult — do we want
to give warning now? — hard to tell what
actions will be taken against Americans — depending
on what's desired, there's a wide range
of actions — ultimate we would suggest
(Eisenhower - Tunis - 22 knots / 15 days)

Meese: what about protection of embassy?

Carlucci: ~~mita~~ Argentine responsibility

Pres: what's different... (discussion of requests for material
support ensues)

Carlucci: question value of linking to Communism (p2... top)
— suggests we're only interested when communists
involved

Haing: we debated this — already watered down
... Galtiere & Soviets

Bud: talked to Clark this am — proposed (p1) we
change paras 2 & 3

Haig: I have no problem ...

Carlucci: communicate in advance to Argentina

Haig: Amb met w/ Galtiere last night - he knows, but ...

Bud: ^{they} don't have text ??

Haig: no

Bud: Jeanne

Kirkpatrick: what's likely to happen at UN today is ...
— UN Sec Gen'l propose Agha Khan as mediator

Pres: who (... discussion ... head of refugee organization)

Kirkpatrick: (further discussion) — ~~I~~ I think Argentines will accept any kind of offer the Sec Gen'l will make to mediate — Argentina can't count on full nonaligned support, since Commonwealth has held together

Haig: up to know, Argentines have tried to avoid UN — now they're forced to use it — no longer

view us as free agent, but as advocate of British position — until Argentines draw back from undisguised transfer of sovereignty, Thatcher cannot accept

Bud: focus on p. 4

Kirkpatrick: what does CCC guarantees suspension mean?

Haig/Enders: very little — \$2M

Weinberger: what does suspension of oil exports mean — what's meant

Enders: — has been allowed to run through crisis, but would be stopped — munitions list — dual use items

Inman: continued Israeli

Carlucci: certification if they do it can deliver?

Weinberger: although not in this, might consider certifying (like now)

Kirkpatrick: make mockery of human rights

Jones: my mil counterpart UK pleased

Pres: does this make it less possible for us to go back in as a mediator

Haig: Argentines have been told & told & told

Pres: —

Meese: that question will be asked anyway

Weinberger: need to get credit

Haig: real problem won't come from that para., but from the sanctions ...

Inman: will continue logistic support

Haig: wouldn't be honest — goes beyond base agreement

Weinberger: also clarified

Pres: —

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Kirkpatrick: if you get that rough - Argentines
will find forum

Reagan: let's hope so - would be
wonderful if after all these
years

(bid) Statement at 1130 today?

Pres: OK

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