

①



Prime Minister.
 Would you be prepared to look
 at this again soon. You may
 not want to do so immediately before Britain
 but perhaps immediately after?

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

12 November 1979

Dear Michael,

P.M. 13/11

Yes - but give us

Anglo/Argentine Relations

a few days of the situation.

In your letter of 15 October, you said that the Prime Minister had asked that discussion of the Falkland Islands by OD on 17 October should be postponed until after the Rhodesian issue had been settled. I spoke to you about this shortly afterwards.

When the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary saw the Argentine Foreign Minister in New York at the end of September Brigadier Pastor suggested a "programme of work", which included Mr Ridley meeting with the Argentine Deputy Foreign Minister twice a year very informally with an open agenda, switching to official meetings when there was something agreed to be formalised.

The Argentine Charge d'Affaires called on Mr Ridley on 2 November to convey an invitation from the Deputy Foreign Minister, Commodore Cavandoli, to meet him in New York in the next week or so. The meeting would be informal, with no agenda, and would be aimed at enabling the Ministers to become better acquainted in advance of further Falkland discussions.

We do not know for sure why the Argentines have suggested this meeting at this time. We have repeatedly made clear to them that we are not yet ready to discuss the Falkland Islands question. There is some possibility that the Air Force, now in charge of the Argentine Foreign Ministry, wants to be able to show that they are doing no less well than their Navy predecessors and that discussions with us on Falklands matters are in progress. If this were to help them keep their wilder military colleagues in check, so much the better for us.

To decline this invitation runs the risk of awakening Argentine suspicions that we are simply stringing them along. This carries with it the danger of their doing something unpredictable. However, we are not in favour of a meeting which has no substance: the Argentines would want to talk about the Falkland Islands and there is clearly as yet nothing for us to say. Total silence on Mr Ridley's part would hardly make for a constructive meeting. Mr Ridley has, therefore, with the Secretary of State's agreement, sent the Argentine Deputy Foreign Minister a polite but gentle message of regret. We hope that this will hold the position for the time being; but pressure on us to enter into substantive negotiations may soon increase. Lord Carrington hopes that it will be possible for OD to take decisions on the Falklands by about the end of November so that we shall be able to open negotiations at a

/time



time of our own choosing.

Yours truly
R M J Lyne

(R M J Lyne)
Private Secretary

Michael Alexander Esq
10 Downing Street
LONDON

13 NOV 1979

