



dt
Argentina

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

21 December 1981

Argentina

Thank you for your letter of 18 December. The Prime Minister is not inclined to send a message of congratulations to General Galtieri. In general the Prime Minister does not like sending messages on the occasion of a military takeover.

A. J. COLES

Roderic Lyne, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

R.

060



Prime Minister -

Agree to sending
endorsed message?

A. Coles
D. J. Lyne
19/12

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

18 December 1981

I don't like
these messages on
military takeovers.
No message for
me

Dear John,

Argentina

President Viola of Argentina has been dismissed from office by the military junta. General Leopoldo Fortunato Galtieri, Commander-in-Chief of the Army, becomes President on 22 December. The question arises of whether the Prime Minister should send him a message of congratulations.

There have been no elections in Argentina since the military takeover in 1976 and it looks unlikely that there will be any in the near future. General Galtieri will be the third President since the military coup in 1976: all have been either the serving or the retired Commander-in-Chief of the Army. Argentina has a bad record in the human rights field, although the situation has been improving gradually. The Armed Forces continue to refuse to be held accountable for the excesses of the past.

On the other hand, both the Falklands dispute and our valuable trade with Argentina mean that it is important to maintain a good working relationship with the Argentines. A message would be well received and, conversely, its absence would be noted. The Prime Minister sent a message to President Viola on the occasion of his inauguration, as did several of our European partners. We expect most of them to send messages to the new President.

No.

We therefore recommend that, as a routine courtesy, the Prime Minister should send a brief formal message to the incoming President. I enclose a draft for the Prime Minister's consideration.

yours
R M J Lyne

(R M J Lyne)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street

DRAFT: minute/letter/teleletter/despatch/note

TYPE: Draft/Final 1+

FROM:

Reference

PRIME MINISTER

DEPARTMENT:

TEL. NO:

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

TO:

Your Reference

- Top Secret
- Secret
- Confidential
- Restricted
- Unclassified

HE General Leopoldo Fortunato Galtieri
President of the Republic of Argentina

Copies to:

PRIVACY MARKING

SUBJECT:

.....In Confidence

CAVEAT.....

On behalf of Her Majesty's Government, I should like to congratulate you on your accession to the Presidency of the Republic of Argentina. I look forward to the continuation of close relations between our two countries.

Enclosures—flag(s).....