

Mr. Harter
Ops

Argentina

**PRIME MINISTER'S
PERSONAL MESSAGE
SERIAL No. T 53A/81**

UNCLASSIFIED

OO BUENOS AIRES (DESKBY 271200Z)

GRS 94

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FROM FCO 261730Z MARCH 81

TO IMMEDIATE BUENOS AIRES

TELEGRAM NUMBER 101 OF 27 MARCH

6 YOUR TELNO 109: PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURATION

1. IN THE LIGHT OF THE FURTHER INFORMATION IN TUR, THE PRIME MINISTER HAS AGREED TO SEND VIOLA THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE:

BEGINS:

'I TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO SEND YOU MY CONGRATULATIONS AND THOSE OF HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT ON YOUR ACCESSION TO THE PRESIDENCY AND I LOOK FORWARD TO THE CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT OF RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES'.

ENDS.

2. PLEASE DELIVER AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AFTER INAUGURATION.

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UNCLASSIFIED

26 March 1981

Argentina

The Prime Minister has seen and approved the message to General Viola enclosed with your letter to me of 24 March. She would however prefer that the reference to "our relations" should be changed to read "relations between our two countries".

MODBA

Roderic Lyne, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Rlb



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

Prime Minister

Alpa list.

24 March 1981

Handwritten initials: "M", "Yus", and a dash.

Handwritten initials: "and".

Dear Michael,

Argentina

General Roberto Viola becomes President of the Republic of Argentina on 29 March. The question arises whether the Prime Minister should send him a message of congratulations.

General Viola, like his predecessor, General Videla, was appointed by the Armed Forces: there have been no elections since the military takeover in 1976 and none are planned for the future. In the human rights field Argentina has a bad record and, although there have been improvements lately, abuses still continue as does the Armed Forces' resistance to accepting any accountability for the excesses of the past. An inauguration message could be criticised in the UK as giving support to an undemocratic regime and to its human rights policies.

On the other hand, it is important to us to have a good working relationship with the Argentine Government, principally because of the Falklands dispute, but also because of our increasingly valuable trade links. A message would be well received; and, conversely, its absence would be noted. There are likely to be messages from the Americans, the Germans, the French, the Irish, the Canadians and perhaps the Australians and Italians too. We should therefore be in respectable company; and any criticism from the human rights lobby could be dealt with by emphasising a message's courtesy nature.

On balance, therefore, the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary is in favour of a message to the incoming President (he has already arranged to send one to the new Foreign Minister). I enclose a draft for the Prime Minister's consideration.

Yours ever
Roderic Lyne

(R M J Lyne)
Private Secretary

M O'D B Alexander Esq
10 Downing Street

DSR 11 (Revised)

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

His Excellency General Roberto Eduardo Viola

Copies to:

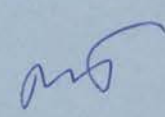
PRIVACY MARKING

SUBJECT:

.....In Confidence

CAVEAT.....

I take this opportunity to send you my congratulations, and those of Her Majesty's Government, on your accession to the Presidency and I look forward to the continued development of ~~our~~ relations *between our two countries.*



Enclosures—flag(s).....

24 MAR 1961

