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10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

29 April 1982

Dear Mr. Skinner,

Thank you for your letter of 27 April with which you enclosed one from Mr. M. Shipley, Secretary of the Chesterfield Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, about the Falkland Islands.

It has always been our wish, and it still is our wish, to settle this dispute by negotiation. Our repossession of South Georgia, including the attack on the Argentine submarine, in no way alters that. We seek the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution demanding the withdrawal of Argentine forces, and we seek it by peaceful means if possible. But throughout many years of discussion with Argentina, we have always stressed the importance of the Islanders' rights and wishes and we cannot allow these to be denied by Argentina's territorial ambitions. No-one should doubt our determination to free the Islanders from occupation, and to allow them to express their views freely on their future.

Mr. Shipley's fears about the possible use of nuclear weapons are however unfounded. It is of course inconceivable that Britain would use such weapons in confrontation with Argentina over the Falkland Islands.

Secretary of State Haig has been tireless in his efforts to find a negotiated settlement. However, the Argentines have shown no inclination to implement the UN Security Council's Resolution. I hope they will reconsider this. As our fleet approaches the Islands, the urgent need is to speed up the negotiations. We remain in close touch with Mr. Haig.

Yours sincerely
Dennis Skinner

Dennis Skinner, Esq., M.P.