

Subject filed in Argentina: Relations A 31.

Prime Minister

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PRIME MINISTER'S



PERSONAL MESSAGE

T 2258/82

CANADA

PRIME MINISTER • PREMIER MINISTRE

OTTAWA, K1A 0A2

November 23, 1982

The Canadians delivered the message, dated 23 November, to the F./C.O. on 4 January. I do not think a reply is necessary, especially given the lapse of time.

A.S.C. 6.1

My dear Margaret,

Thank you for your message regarding the United Nations General Assembly debate on the Falkland Islands - a matter which Allan MacEachen and I discussed with Francis Pym when he was here and which our officials in Ottawa, London and New York have reviewed at length.

We fully share your own well-founded concerns regarding the use of force to settle international disputes, a position we have made clear to Argentina and other nations, both by our actions and our words.

When I wrote to you last June, I mentioned that the manner in which the longer term problems regarding the status and security of the Falklands are solved would have important implications for the relations of your allies with Argentina and other Latin American countries and indeed for long-term peace and stability in the region. It continues to be our hope that Britain and Argentina will eventually be able to resolve their differences over the islands. Thus, we have attempted to maintain a dialogue with the new leaders of Argentina in order to encourage them to make a public commitment that this question would be dealt with by peaceful means only. We shall continue our endeavours to persuade present and future leaders of Argentina to abide by the rules of international law and not resort to force as was done so unwisely last spring.

The Right Honourable Margaret Thatcher
Prime Minister of the United Kingdom
10 Downing Street
London

Regarding the United Nations resolution itself, we would have much preferred that it not come forward this year, so soon after the conflict. We appreciate the special problems that this may have created for you. Unfortunately however, the resolution sponsored by 20 Latin American countries did come forward and while we did not discuss the text of the resolution with the Latin Americans in any formal way, we did tell the Argentines that in its initial form, the resolution contained the same elements which had given us difficulties in past resolutions and thus would lead us to abstain on the vote.

In response to these and similar views, Argentina produced a new text which, I must tell you frankly, removed many of these objectionable elements. It also strongly suggested that the present government of Argentina was attempting to distance itself from its discredited predecessor by adopting a much more realistic approach to the Falklands issue. What was particularly significant, in my view, was that the new text contained a reaffirmation of United Nations principles regarding the non-use of force in international relations and the settlement of disputes by peaceful means.

In reaching our position on the matter, we felt it necessary to take this situation into account, as well as the importance of our growing relations with our Latin American neighbours.

We also felt it important to take fully into consideration our understanding of, and sympathy with, your serious concern with this matter and the importance which your government attached to the vote on the issue.

We thus concluded that in the light of all circumstances, we should abstain on the vote and, as you know, this was the position taken by our delegation.

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention.

Yours sincerely, *and best wishes*

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