

cc Sir AP

Prime MinisterAgree to the proposed Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

reply to the UNSecretary-General aboutthe Falklands (attached)? 5 September, 1983

A-J.C. 5/9.

Yes no

Dear John,

Falklands at the United Nations

The Prime Minister may wish to have an account of recent developments in the handling of the Falklands question in the United Nations.

The UN Secretary-General called on the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary on 31 August. Sir Geoffrey Howe said that he found the Secretary-General's call for an early resumption of negotiations disappointing and made it clear that, in the foreseeable circumstances, negotiations were not practicable. The Argentines could not approach negotiations with clean hands. The Falkland Islanders still felt shattered by their experience of an invasion. The way forward was to build trust. But the Argentines had not even renounced the use of force to pursue their objectives. The Secretary-General maintained in reply that in referring to the desirability of early negotiations, he was only executing his mandate from the General Assembly. He doubted whether any progress could be expected as long as the Argentines were engaged in their electoral process.

We now need to reply to the Secretary-General's letter of 20 July (I enclose a copy). I enclose a draft of the reply the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary intends to instruct our Permanent Representative in New York to make. Sir Geoffrey Howe believes that, to forestall another round of this correspondence, we should not deliver this before the middle of this month.

Meanwhile the Falklands have been discussed by the Committee of 24. On 31 August two Falkland Island Councillors, Mr Tony Blake and Mr John Cheek, appeared before the Committee. They delivered effective and convincing statements describing developments in the Islands since the invasion and re-affirming their support for British policy, in particular on defence matters. The Venezuelans then tabled in the Committee a draft Resolution, based largely on last year's General Assembly Resolution 37/9, and very similar to a draft Resolution for this year's General Assembly which the Argentines are already promoting. Adoption of the Resolution by consensus would have been damaging, and we lobbied in order to ensure it would be voted on. As the composition of the Committee of 24 is so unfavourable to us, the vote (19-0-5) is much as we expected, although we had hoped that Fiji, which abstained



with Australia, Norway, Sierra Leone, and Trinidad and Tobago, might have voted against the Resolution as they did in the General Assembly last year. We are not members of the Committee.

We have meanwhile sent replies to two other Argentine letters to the Secretary-General criticising our refusal to negotiate and portraying our decision to construct a new airfield in the Falkland Islands as a threat to stability in the South Atlantic. Our replies dealt firmly with these points in standard terms. We also propose shortly to instruct our Mission in New York to reply to a further Argentine letter about the incursions into the Falkland Islands Protection Zone in early August.

I am copying this to Richard Mottram (MOD) and Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

Yours ever
J E Holmes

(J E Holmes)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street

DRAFT: minute/letter/teleletter/despatch/note

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FROM:

Sir J Thomson

Reference

DEPARTMENT:

TEL. NO:

KUHAMBY

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

TO:

Your Reference

- Top Secret
- Secret
- Confidential
- Restricted
- Unclassified

HE Sr Javier Perez de Cuellar
 Secretary-General
 UNITED NATIONS

Copies to:

PRIVACY MARKING

SUBJECT:

.....In Confidence

I have the honour to refer to your letter of 20 July seeking the views of my Government on the problem of the Falkland Islands in order to assist you in the preparation of a report to the 38th Session of the General Assembly. On the instructions of my Government, I wish to state the following.

CAVEAT.....

Argentina's invasion in 1982, its resort to force in flagrant violation of the fundamental principles of the UN Charter, is not an event which has faded into history. That act of aggression has consequences which must be recognised by the international community as well as by the present Argentine Government and their successors. By compelling us, in exercise of the inherent right to self-defence recognised in Article 51 of the Charter, to take military action to defend the Falkland Islands and their people, the Argentine Government caused a tragic loss of life on both sides. They also caused widespread

Enclosures—flag(s).....

destruction on the Islands, of which the effects still remain, despite substantial efforts by the Islanders and the British Government.

Moreover, it should be clearly borne in mind that Argentina resorted to force while a process of negotiation about the matters in dispute between us was under way. The invasion of the Falkland Islands took place only one month after a round of talks which was characterised in a joint communique as 'cordial and positive'. These facts have inevitably damaged Argentine credibility in the eyes of the world and cast doubt on Argentina's good faith in calling for a resumption of negotiations.

The Argentine authorities set great store by their 'expressed intention', reflected in the preamble to General Assembly Resolution 37/9, not to renew hostilities. They have also professed their commitment to a peaceful solution to the matters in dispute between us. This is cynical: the events of 1982 demonstrated all too vividly that Argentine protestations of good intent need to be regarded at the least with caution. Even now, despite their professions of peaceful intent, the Argentine attitude, as reflected in public statements and incidents such as the incursion on 5 August by a military aircraft into the Falkland Islands Protection Zone, remains menacing.

The United Kingdom has the inherent right and indeed the duty to defend the Falkland Islands and its people against any renewed attack.

We have therefore considered it necessary to construct a new airfield in the Falkland Islands capable of accepting wide-bodied jets, which will make it easier to secure the defence of the Islands in the event of further aggression. Talk of this airfield as a 'NATO base' is manifest nonsense. The construction of the new airfield is also essential for the improvement of the Falkland Islanders' communications with the rest of the world, in accordance with the recommendations made by Lord Shackleton in 1976 as well as in 1982.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Your Excellency expresses the conviction that there should be an early initiation of negotiations. There is no sign that for Argentina this would mean anything other than discussion of the transfer of sovereignty over the Falkland Islands against the manifest wishes of the Islanders. In view of this, and of the other circumstances already described, my Government consider that it is not reasonable to call on us to enter into negotiations, still less to suggest an early initiation of them. This was our view of General Assembly Resolution 37/9, and nothing that has happened since has given grounds for changing it.

Despite having been the victim of aggression in 1982, and in the face of the continuing hostile attitude of the Argentine authorities, the British Government has taken and supported several initiatives aimed at reducing

/tension

tension and at restoring the more normal relationship with Argentina which is necessary for the establishment of mutual confidence. My Government supported the IMF programme aimed at rescuing Argentina from its economic difficulties. But even in this process, the Argentines have unfortunately been reluctant to meet obligations which they had knowingly accepted or to carry out undertakings which they voluntarily entered into.

The people of Argentina are approaching the date of elections which should give them a freely-elected civilian government. The British Government welcomes the moves towards the restoration of democracy in Argentina and hopes that the Argentine people will, over a lasting period, live under democratic rule and enjoy the full human rights to which all peoples are entitled. Even so a new government in Argentina will inherit the consequences of its predecessors' decisions. So we must look to Argentina to respond to our initiatives and to demonstrate convincingly that it is turning its back on aggression and renouncing the profound consequences of its aggression in 1982 and acknowledge the Falkland Islanders' right to live in peace and security under a government of their own choosing. This is the way forward, rather than a posture of sterile confrontation marked by evasion of clear undertakings, and by hypocritical calls for negotiations.

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

7 September 1983

FALKLANDS AT THE UNITED NATIONS

Thank you for your letter of 5 September summarising recent developments in the handling of the Falklands question in the United Nations and enclosing the text of a draft reply to the Secretary-General's letter of 20 July.

BF

The Prime Minister has noted these papers and agrees with the proposed reply to the Secretary-General.

A. J. COLES

John Holmes, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

HCC