

Emergency Unit

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Mr Dearlove

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RECEIVED IN REGISTRY NO	
29 APR 1987	
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FALKLANDS

1. The French Ambassador called this morning to report to me the gist of a long conversation he had had with the Head of the Department of the Americas at Itamaraty yesterday. Ambassador Richard said that Minister Ricupero had made the following main points, some of which were not much more than confirmation of suggestions made by Richard himself.

- (a) The message which President Figueiredo sent to the President of Argentina reflected the personal friendship between the two men and President Figueiredo's personal connections with Buenos Aires. Nevertheless, the President had been careful to express his feelings of friendship for the Argentine people rather than for their present Government. In the case of the message to Mrs Thatcher, Ricupero confirmed that the term "effective moderation" was particularly directed to the impending British blockade of Falkland Islands waters.
- (b) When Ambassador Richard pressed him on the Brazilian offer of good offices, Ricupero seemed rather loth to make any commitment in this sense for the moment. He said that we must first wait and see whether Mr Haig's simultaneous negotiation with both sides produced a satisfactory result. So far as Brazil was concerned, the later she was asked to intervene, the better.
- (c) Ricupero explained that there were three main reasons for Brazil ruling herself out as a mediator in the technical sense:
 - (i) her consistent support for the Argentine claim to the Falklands since 1833;
 - (ii) her undertaking to protect Argentine interests in Britain; and
 - (iii) - most importantly - Brazil's feeling of solidarity with her neighbour and her concern for the maintenance of friendly relations with Argentina in the future.

When Ambassador Richard asked whether this explained Brazil's reluctance to condemn the Argentine invasion of the Falklands, Ricupero agreed. He claimed, however, that Brazil had been careful not to support the Argentine action, even if she did not condemn it.

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(d) Ricupero agreed with Richard that there was a risk that the initial aggression by Argentina would be lost to sight if and when battle was joined between the Argentine and British fleets. Opinion throughout South America was likely to be hostile to the presence of a large British naval force in South Atlantic waters so close to the mainland. This, said Richard, must be seen as a kind of "Monroe reflex". It would undoubtedly colour the debate at the OAS Council meeting which Argentina was now trying to promote. According to Ricupero, the Argentines did not consider that the UN Security Council Resolution No 502 will be viewed by the OAS as constraining their freedom of discussion or resolution, since the first phrase of Resolution No 502 specifically calls for the cessation of hostilities and Britain is now ignoring that call. Both Ricupero and Richard were agreed that there was a strong possibility that Argentina would get the necessary 14 votes in support of a resolution favourable to her in the OAS Council, particularly as only Trinidad and Tobago have a vote in the Council (this was news to me).

2. I thanked Ambassador Richard for this information and promised to continue to compare notes with him. I gave him copies of the Brazilian Imperial Government's notes of March 1833 expressing Brazil's support for the Argentine position on the Falklands. He said that he thought they were some of the feeblest notes he had ever seen and agreed with me that the complete absence of any mention of juridical considerations was significant.

12 April 1982

G W Harding

cc: SAMD, FCO