

RECORD OF MEETING AT ITAMARATY ON 14 JULY 1982

ALB 08013		Reference.....
RECEIVED IN REGISTRY NO.		
13 AUG 1982		
DESK OFFICER		REGISTRY
INDEX	PA	* CHIEF TAKER
	<i>DZ</i>	<i>WLS</i> <i>2/16</i>

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Present:

Sr Ramiro Saraiva Guerreiro  
Foreign Minister of Brazil

Mr G W Harding  
HM Ambassador

Ambassador Ivan Velloso da Silveira  
Batalha  
Head of Departamento da Europa

Mr M Perceval  
Counsellor

Brazil and the Mexican Initiative on the Falklands

1. Sr Saraiva Guerreiro said that he had called the Ambassador to give him an account of the recent visit by the Argentine delegation and the proposal at Mexican initiative to inscribe the Falklands question on the agenda for the forthcoming United Nations General Assembly. Brazil had been interested to learn how Argentina viewed this proposal. Given that the subject was bound to come to the General Assembly in one way or another (e.g. from the Committee of 24, where the Latin Americans were represented by among others Panama and Venezuela) there seemed merit in dealing with the subject in a controlled fashion as an independent item on the agenda of the General Assembly.

2. Sr Guerreiro said that the listing of the item would not inhibit any positive action between now and then on the part of the UN Secretary-General or cut across any efforts of his to bring the two governments together in discussion, as Perez de Cuellar apparently feared. If there were no developments for the Secretary-General to report, one could not ask the Argentines to forego inscription of the item: if, on the other hand, the Argentines were able to report a start on negotiations, then the item could always be removed from the agenda. Sr Guerreiro said that he had counselled the Argentine envoys Quijano and Listre against angry statements at the UN made mainly for domestic effect. He did not know the new Foreign Minister, Lanari, personally but believed him to be a prudent man. He trusted, therefore, that his point would be taken. Brazil believed that the draft resolution should not contain statements of condemnation of the United Kingdom but in its preamble should merely recall earlier resolutions. The operative part should simply call upon the parties to negotiate and perhaps should give some kind of mandate to the UN Secretary-General to exercise his good offices. Sr Guerreiro said that he was not unhopeful that the Argentines might be satisfied with a resolution of this kind; which should not actually discourage future negotiations. If other potential co-sponsors of the resolution knew that the principally interested party, Argentina, was satisfied with a text, it would be more difficult for them to insert more extreme language.

3. HM Ambassador asked whether the Argentine delegation had shown a

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text of the draft resolution. Sr Guerreiro said that they had indeed shown him two alternative texts. The stronger version took for granted Argentine rights in the Malvinas while the other was on the lines he had described above. HM Ambassador said that the assertion of Argentine rights would represent a major departure from the language customarily used in UN resolutions on the subject so far. Sr Guerreiro believed that the Argentines could accept the weaker text, though some delegations would seek to stiffen it. The Argentines had told him that Cuba had already suggested working in a reference to Puerto Rico! Brazil believed that by co-sponsoring the more acceptable text she would be in a good position to fend off unwelcome amendments. Procedurally, the idea was for the Latin American countries as a bloc to request the inscription of the Malvinas question on the General Assembly agenda and then when the item was reached to put forward a resolution. Brazil had not yet taken the decision to co-sponsor, but was minded to do so if the text kept within the appropriate limits. If the Argentines wanted a stronger text, Brazil would have to think again.

4. HM Ambassador asked how many co-sponsors were likely to come forward and whether a reference to decolonisation came into the wording of both drafts which the Brazilians had seen. Sr Guerreiro said that there would be many co-sponsors, indeed most of the Latin American countries. The more reasonable the draft the more co-sponsors there would be. As for the wording, there was indeed reference to decolonisation in both the drafts presently under consideration.

#### Post Falklands Balance Sheet

5. HM Ambassador asked what balance sheet the Brazilian Government was inclined to draw up in the aftermath of the Falklands crisis. Sr Guerreiro said that it was hard to be objective as one tended to place weight on the outcome one wished to see. The final outcome was still hard to foresee. A major worry throughout for Brazil had been the evolution of events in Argentina and the possibility that things might go out of control very fast, with some kind of Peronist or nationalist-leftist forces coming to the top. What we had now was in a sense the least bad outcome in Argentina.

6. Turning to the Inter-American system Sr Guerreiro said that the system continued to exist but had been declining over a period of time and had now lost much of its relevance. He was astonished at the miscalculation of Buenos Aires in its reading of the Inter-American realities and its failure to appreciate the excellent relations between the USA and Britain. He had pointed this out to the Argentines and added that they must expect the USA to take account of its own strategic interests. The Inter-American system might be useful for small countries (Costa Rica, Panama, etc) if they came under threat from other neighbours but not for the larger countries like Brazil and Argentina which were in no danger of being attacked by their neighbours. Nor were they likely to be attacked by the USSR, so the TIAR was used less from that point of view. If it came to East/West conflict the Russians would be busy attacking the USA not the countries of Latin America and in that case the USA might find considerable difficulty in offering assistance anywhere else. Nor was the TIAR an effective barrier against communism, which

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was 99% an internal question. Nonetheless, Brazil was concerned by the squabbles affecting its neighbours, not least because these distracted governments from their real problems, which were economic. Unfortunately, Brazil could not force its neighbours to resolve these squabbles.

7. HM Ambassador asked how Brazil viewed the performance of the United Kingdom in the conflict with Argentina. Before the landings on the Islands the Minister had expressed criticism of what he had called our excessive use of force and what he regarded as insufficient weight given by Britain to the negotiating process. How did he feel now that the final outcome had proved less bloody than had been feared? Did he now think Britain had used excessive force? Sr Guerreiro avoided giving a direct answer, saying that Argentina had certainly lost opportunities during the negotiating efforts of the UN Secretary-General. When both sides had put their positions in writing to Perez de Cuellar, Sr Guerreiro said that he himself had conducted an exercise to try to seek a lowest common denominator position, which he had then sent to the UN Headquarters. This exercise had got nowhere and indeed had perhaps been too late in the day to stand any chance. He was inclined to think that Perez de Cuellar had given up too soon: if he had put forward compromise proposals of his own, the two sides would at least have felt obliged to look at them.

8. HM Ambassador asked whether the crisis had affected relations between Brazil and Britain? Sr Guerreiro replied that substantially it had not. The Brazilian Government took up a position which diverged from that of the UK, but they looked at the dispute without emotion. HM Ambassador said that he also believed that relations had not suffered. Sr Guerreiro wondered whether the press in Brazil entirely agreed? HM Ambassador said that his impression of the Brazilian press was that it had been almost uniformly favourable to the British position. As for reactions in Britain, he was confident that the British Government had understood the reasons for Brazil's position of neutrality tilting towards Argentina. In practice, he thought that his frank exchange of views between us as the crisis progressed had, if anything, further enhanced the relationship of trust between the two Governments. Before the Falklands crisis burst upon us, relations had been on an upward curve (cf. the visit of the Secretary of State last year). It seemed to him that the sooner we resumed this upward curve the better. In this context, the proposed visit by Mr Onslow seemed timely and appropriate.

9. Sr Guerreiro agreed that this was the case. We should not attempt anything too dramatic for some time. He had wondered about the pros and cons of the suggested visit by the Minister of State but had finally decided to follow the dictates of his diary. The date of Tuesday 10 August had suddenly become vacant, as the Prime Minister of the Netherlands had been obliged to postpone his planned visit to Brazil on that date for medical reasons. He was therefore glad to be in a position to offer this date to Mr Onslow and hoped it would be convenient to him.

c.c. South America Dept, FCO (3)  
Washington



*With the compliments of*  
HER MAJESTY'S AMBASSADOR

G W Harding

*Brazil / Zuhlen*  
23.7.82

BRITISH EMBASSY  
BRASILIA

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