

2. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Argentina¹

Washington, May 7, 1980, 0200Z

120050. Subject: US/UK Consultations: UK Talks on Falkland Islands.

1. Secret-Entire text.

2. During the discussion on the Caribbean and Guatemala-Belize (septels)² on April 30 between UK FCO Minister Ridley and FCO Latin America Director Harding, and Asst. Secretary Bowdler and DAS

¹ Source: Department of State, Central Foreign Policy File, D800225-0913. Secret; Priority; Exdis. Sent for information Priority to London. Drafted by J.D. Blacken (ARA/CEN); cleared in S/S-O and in draft by Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs John A. Bushnell, W.R. Warne (ARA/CAR), and M. Michaud (EUR/NE); and approved by Bowdler.

² The portion of the conversation dealing with the Caribbean was summarized and transmitted by the Department in telegram 117143 to London, Ottawa, Paris, Bonn, USNATO, USINT Havana, Kingston, Paramaribo, and Brussels, May 3. (Department of State, Central Foreign Policy File, D800220-0586) A summary of the portion of the conversation that addressed the Guatemala-Belize border dispute was transmitted in telegram 121020 to Belize, May 8. (Department of State, Central Foreign Policy File, D800227-0153)

Bushnell, Ridley described his recent talks with the Argentines concerning the Falkland Islands.³

3. Ridley said that his recent meeting with the Argentines should be called “talks” rather than negotiations. He met with the Argentine Foreign Minister Cavandoli to test the Argentine position and report back to his government. An anodyne communique had been issued at the conclusion of the talks. The Argentine position is that they want to have a solution which enables them to say that the Islands have been returned to them.

4. For the 1850 British residents on the Islands, the problem is one of their interest which is not to be Argentinian. This is also an emotional political issue in the UK all out of proportion to the number of people involved. However, if nothing is done, the Argentines might harass the British on the Island. Ridley said that both sides would have to be flexible. He commented that perhaps one solution might be for the UK to recognize Argentine sovereignty, then lease the Islands, since no Argentines live on them; however, this raises questions of oil rights, etc.

5. Argentine military leaders told Ridley that Argentina had just two major foreign policy problems left—the Beagle Channel,⁴ and Falkland Island disputes—and once they were solved the slate would be wiped clean. Then, the military could turn the country over to a civilian government.

6. Ridley remarked that the Argentines appeared to be “increasingly thick” with the Russians and, to a lesser extent perhaps, with the Cubans. Bowdler noted that they appeared interested in developing cooperation with the Soviets on nuclear energy. The U.S., however, did not believe that they were developing a close relationship with the Cubans. Bushnell pointed out that Cuban support of Argentine terrorists will continue to be an impediment to close relations beyond trade between the Argentine military regime and the Cubans.

Christopher

³ The talks took place April 28–29 in New York. The British and Argentine delegations were headed by Ridley and Cavandoli, respectively. A formal summary of the talks was presented in the form of two separate but identical letters from the delegations to Waldheim, dated May 5. The U.S. Mission to the United Nations reported on May 13 that the letters were circulated as General Assembly documents on May 12. The English language text of these letters was transmitted to the Department in telegram 1871 from USUN, May 13. (Department of State, Central Foreign Policy File, D800242–0884)

⁴ See footnote 2, Document 1.