

3. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in the United Kingdom¹

Washington, March 3, 1981, 2021Z

53712. Subject: Secretary's Meeting With British Foreign Secretary Carrington, February 27, 1981: Falkland Islands.

1. (S—Entire text).

2. At their meeting on the above date and subject, Carrington briefly outlined what he regards as the principal elements of the UK dispute with Argentina over the Falkland Islands.² Argentina will not agree to put its claims before the International Court because they are not valid. Problem for Britain is similar to what they frequently encounter when they try to cast off a colony: The people who live on the Falkland Islands do not want to become Argentines.³ The British tactic is to keep the ball in the air as long as possible in order to avoid a showdown with Argentina. One idea the British are considering is to cede sovereignty of the Falkland Islands to Argentina on the understanding that Argentina would lease back the Islands to Britain for 99 years. The Falkland Islanders don't like this idea.

3. Participants in addition to principals: US—Stoessel, Rashish, Eagleburger, Streater and Funseth; UK—Henderson, Palliser, Bullard, Fretwell, Walden, Fenn and Pakenham.

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¹ Source: Department of State, Central Foreign Policy File, D810100-0377. Secret; Immediate; Exdis. Sent for information Immediate to Buenos Aires. Drafted by Funseth; cleared by Eagleburger and Bremer; and approved by Goldberg.

² No memorandum of conversation of this meeting has been found.

³ On January 20, as part of an overall assessment of British policy toward Latin America and the Caribbean, the Embassy in London wrote of the state of the Falklands/Malvinas negotiations: "The end-of-year push to achieve some movement toward a settlement with Argentina on the Falklands dispute came to naught. Ridley's efforts to employ a forcing strategy in negotiations with the Islanders were thwarted by a small but highly-effective Falklands lobby in London, concentrated in the House of Lords and the Conservative media. As a result, Ridley was forced to back off and give public assurances that nothing would be done to change the status of the Islanders without their express approval. The Foreign Office, though discouraged, will probably have another go at moving things off dead center before the current Parliament is dismissed. Ridley may have decided it is simply not worth the trouble." (Telegram 1165 from London, January 20; Department of State, Central Foreign Policy File, D810029-0299)