

## 8. Telegram From the Embassy in the United Kingdom to the Department of State<sup>1</sup>

London, December 10, 1981, 1704Z

24464. Subj: Talks Resume on Falkland Islands. Ref: London 4663.<sup>2</sup>

1. C—Entire text.

2. Summary: Anglo-Argentine talks on the future of the Falkland Islands will be held in Geneva on Dec. 18–19. With no solution in sight, the British objective is simply to keep the process of dialogue going. While the search for a settlement continues, the status quo serves as a useful reminder to Britain of its continuing responsibilities in the Western Hemisphere. End summary.

3. Robin Fearn, Head of the Foreign Office's South America Department, confirmed to EmbOff on December 8 that talks on the future of the Falkland Islands will be held in Geneva on December 18–19. Two representatives of the Falkland Islands will also attend the talks.

4. Fearn noted that circumstances had gotten in the way of an earlier resumption of the talks adjourned in New York at the end of February.

—In March, the government in Buenos Aires changed.<sup>3</sup>

—In July, Argentina, after informal talks with HMG, had circulated a statement at the UN about reconvening talks.

—In October, Legislative Council elections were held in the Falklands, with HMG pledged to consult with the winners.

5. HMG views Argentina as the proposer and HMG as the responder in the upcoming talks. The sovereignty issue remains central, and the Islanders seem more determined than ever to remain British. HMG's position is straightforward: It seeks a resolution of the issue, but will not agree to a settlement "over the heads of the Islanders."

6. HMG is pessimistic about possibilities for any dramatic breakthroughs. The Islanders have rejected the lease back arrangement, and few options seem available. It might help, Fearn speculated, if there were another government in Argentina. It is easy to understand, he said, why those currently in charge in Buenos Aires are not well loved. The Falklanders argue with considerable effect in London that they do not wish to become "1800 more disappeared persons." From the U.S.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Department of State, Central Foreign Policy File, D810588–0688. Confidential. Sent for information to Buenos Aires, Brasilia, and Bern.

<sup>2</sup> See Document 4.

<sup>3</sup> On March 29, Lieutenant General Roberto Viola replaced Lieutenant General Jorge Rafael Videla as head of the Argentine Junta and de facto President.

standpoint, while the search for a settlement continues, the status quo serves as a useful reminder to Britain of its continuing responsibilities in the Western Hemisphere.<sup>4</sup>

**Louis**