

23. **Telegram From the Embassy in Argentina to the Department of State**¹

Buenos Aires, March 29, 1982, 1457Z

1768. Subject: Dispute in South Georgia. Ref: Buenos Aires 1753,² 1754.³

1. (S—Entire text).

2. British Ambassador Williams called on me this morning (March 29) with the following information:

—Last Friday⁴ Foreign Minister Costa Mendez proposed informally as a way out of the impasse that the Argentine ship *Bahia Paraiso* take the Argentine working party on South Georgia around to Grytvi-

¹ Source: Department of State, Central Foreign Policy File, D820165–0179. Secret; Immediate; Exdis. Sent for information Immediate to London and for information to Montevideo, Santiago, and USUN.

² See Document 21.

³ In telegram 1754 from Buenos Aires, March 28, the Embassy provided a report on the situation in the South Atlantic as of noon Buenos Aires time. (Department of State, Central Foreign Policy File, D820164–0279)

⁴ March 26. See Document 20.

ken where their entry could be legalized. London accepted this idea over the protests of the Islanders, who I gather are self-governing. The military Junta here rejected the Foreign Minister's proposal. The Foreign Minister then handed yesterday to Williams a note⁵ which insists on Argentine rights and offers no apparent way out of the impasse.

—Williams is now persuaded that the Argentine military have stage-managed this entire incident as a means of pressing the British for accelerated negotiations on the Falklands/Malvinas without revealing their full intentions to the Foreign Ministry. One particular piece of evidence in this regard is the fact that the *Bahia Paraiso* has been unloading equipment at Leith Harbor. Costa Mendez told Williams initially that the ship had been sent there suddenly to watch over the working party and perhaps to evacuate them.

—Lord Carrington has sent a message to the Secretary⁶ asking us to take the problem up with the Argentines, "stressing the need to defuse the situation and find a solution we can all accept." (Williams gave me the text of the message.)

3. I informed Williams that the CNO will be visiting Argentina, arriving Wednesday evening⁷ and departing Saturday afternoon.⁸ I emphasized that this trip had been planned long in advance.

4. Comment: As I feared, the Argentines refuse to have the presence of the working party regularized. The British, for their part, continue to insist that the men must be removed. If that is not done, their point being that the exercise of immigration controls is an essential element of sovereignty. The GOA may be attempting to force HMG to accept the Argentine proposal for a permanent negotiating commission on the Falklands/Malvinas. If that is the purpose, it is difficult to imagine how the Argentines could have been more mistaken in the method they chose.

5. I am not optimistic about the results of an intervention on our part at this juncture. A general appeal from the Secretary to the two sides to calm down might help momentarily, but to ask both to withdraw their ships (which is what is needed) without some agreement on the working party would presumably not go over very well in London. I should note Williams' comment that the British Navy cur-

⁵ Williams provided a copy of Costa Mendez's note to the Embassy on March 29. In telegram 1790 from Buenos Aires, March 30, the Embassy transmitted an informal translation of the note. (Department of State, Central Foreign Policy File, D820167-0259)

⁶ See Document 22.

⁷ March 31.

⁸ April 3.

rently has units on maneuvers in the Caribbean that could be deployed fairly rapidly to the South Atlantic.

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