

28. **Message From British Prime Minister Thatcher to President Reagan¹**

London, March 31, 1982, 2025Z

Dear Ron,

You will know about the disturbing intelligence reports both from your sources and from ours that the Argentine Navy could be preparing to invade the Falkland Islands within the next 48 hours. There are less than 2,000 inhabitants there. We maintain only a small garrison of about 75 Marines at Port Stanley—the capital of the Falklands—and the only Royal Navy vessel which we have in the area at the moment is an ice patrol ship. An Argentine assault would undoubtedly result in loss of life. We could not acquiesce in any Argentine occupation: The Falkland Islanders have always made it clear they wish and intend to remain British.

Will you talk urgently with the Argentine President and ask him to give you an immediate assurance that he will not authorise any landing, let alone any hostilities. You can tell him that we will not escalate the dispute or start fighting. Meanwhile, we are pursuing urgent diplomatic initiatives with the Argentine to reach a settlement and I would ask for your support in this effort too.

Warm personal regards,

Margaret

¹ Source: Reagan Library, Executive Secretariat, NSC Cable File, Falkland File 03/31/1982-04/01/1982. Top Secret; Sensitive. Sent personal from Thatcher via Cabinet Office channels. Telegram 7232 from London, April 1, reported that FCO Assistant Undersecretary for the Americas Ure informed the Embassy that Thatcher, during a late evening meeting on March 31, had decided to send the message to Reagan. (Reagan Library, Executive Secretariat, NSC Country File, Europe and Soviet Union, United Kingdom (04/01/1982-07/31/1982) (4)) In telegram 86943 to London, April 1, the Department re-transmitted the text of Thatcher's message. (Ibid.)