

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

Washington, April 1, 1982, 0429Z

086367. Subject: British Demarche on Argentine Threat.

1. S—Entire text.

2. Summary. UK Ambassador Henderson called on the Secretary to report HMG's fear that the Argentine Government is planning to carry out a military invasion of the Falkland Islands within forty eight hours. He asked for immediate US intervention with the Argentines at the Presidential level. The Secretary assured the British that the US would be in touch urgently with the Argentines at the highest level. End summary.

3. British Ambassador Sir Nicholas Henderson, under instructions from London, called on the Secretary evening of March 31 to inform him that HMG believed it had solid evidence that the Argentine Government was moving a large Naval task force toward the Falkland Islands. The information, which the British believe the US also has, indicates that the task force is due to reach Port Stanley at 0006 hours April 2 and will join a submarine which has orders to observe a beach as a possible landing site. The Ambassador stated that Argentine aircraft overflew the Falklands March 30. More serious, according to the British, is other intelligence which they believe shows that the Argentine Junta is contemplating military action on April 2 no matter what kind of assurances they are giving us.

4. Henderson reported that the UK is still trying to defuse the situation and that Lord Carrington had offered to send a high level figure to Buenos Aires to try and deal with the problem of the workers at Leith Harbor.<sup>2</sup> The British believe, however, that the GOA is not interested in negotiating over the status of the workers, but only on

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Reagan Library, Executive Secretariat, NSC Cable File, Falkland File 03/31/1982-04/01/1982. Secret; Sensitive; Immediate; Nodis. Sent for information Immediate to Buenos Aires.

<sup>2</sup> In telegram 1888 from Buenos Aires, April 1, Shlaudeman reported that Williams had received from Costa Mendez a verbal answer that morning regarding the proposed visit of a high-level British official to discuss the workers at Leith Harbor. Costa Mendez said the Government of Argentina was "not interested" and that "from the Argentine point of view the Leith Harbor affair is closed." Conveying this reply to Shlaudeman, Williams added that Costa Mendez did indicate that "the GOA would be prepared for immediate discussions on the sovereignty issue." (Reagan Library, Executive Secretariat, NSC Country File, Latin America/Central, Argentina (01/01/1982-04/02/1982)) Later that day, Williams provided Shlaudeman with the text of Costa Mendez's written follow-up to his verbal response, an informal translation of which Shlaudeman transmitted to the Department in telegram 1908 from Buenos Aires, April 1. (Ibid.)

the question of sovereignty over the Islands. HMG is convinced that the Argentines will only hold off if the US immediately raises the issue with the Argentine President. Henderson said that the situation is serious and that Mrs. Thatcher is very worried.

5. The Secretary answered that he had been concerned that Carrington thought we had not been supportive enough at the outset of the dispute. The USG had not wanted to take sides as long as the dispute appeared to be only over workers status. Now that that there is plainly a military dimension, we will urgently contact the Argentine Government at the highest level. The Secretary said he recognized that the British have done much for us and in turn Carrington should be told that we will do what we can to assist in this matter.

6. Henderson said Carrington would certainly be reassured to hear that.

7. In addition to the Secretary and the Ambassador, present were Asst. Sec. Enders, DAS Holmes, Robert Service of ARA/SC and Keith Smith of EUR/NE.

**Haig**