

31. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Argentina<sup>1</sup>

Washington, April 1, 1982, 0918Z

86790. For Shlaudeman from Enders. Subject: Possible Military Action Off Falklands.

1. S-Entire text.

2. British Ambassador Henderson has just been in to see the Secretary<sup>2</sup> to follow up on personal message from PriMin Thatcher to President Reagan<sup>3</sup> referring to "the disturbing intelligence reports from both your sources and ours that the Argentine Navy could be preparing to invade the Falkland Islands within the next forty-eight hours." Hender-

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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; Niact Immediate; Nodis. Sent for information Immediate to London.

<sup>2</sup> See Document 30.

<sup>3</sup> See Document 28.

son left us a summary of their intelligence analysis<sup>4</sup> which we are sending you separately. Although our analysts have not developed such a full picture, there is enough information to support their fear of possible military action. We would welcome your comments on the British analysis. But clearly it is difficult in this situation to rely only on our own assessment of intentions. The British are most concerned that the Argentines not know about the extent of their intelligence on Argentine military moves. You should therefore take care not to disclose the source or extent of this intelligence.

3. Thatcher's message says that the Brits "would not acquiesce in any Argentine occupation." That, of course, is a statement of political fact.

4. Request you contact Galtieri immediately. Tell him we have disturbing reports. Tell him that we don't want to overreact, but would like very much to be reassured. Tell him that from the US point of view we believe that we are embarked on one of the most fruitful periods in the history of our relationship, in which we can become not only the partners in the struggle against Communism in the Hemisphere, but together we can again achieve that standing in international life which we both can rightfully claim. Tell him that should any military action occur, for whatever reason, it is a simple fact that overriding internal and external pressure would be brought to bear on us to abandon the new and promising relationship we are building. We would deeply regret that, because we regard it as one of the more promising factors of the current international picture.

5. Tell him that the British tell us they will not escalate the dispute or start fighting. It would be useful if we could assure the British that the Argentines have no intention to make a military landing on disputed Islands or to initiate hostilities.

6. The British have also told us that they are preparing an "urgent, diplomatic initiative," which we understand to be the sending of a high level emissary to Buenos Aires to discuss the South Georgia dispute. We do not want to volunteer, of course, but obviously you should send back to us any reaction for the British that they have to that concept.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Not found.

<sup>5</sup> See Document 30 and footnote 2 thereto.

7. You should say that the Secretary, acting at the request of the President, has asked you to make this demarche.<sup>6</sup>

8. This message supersedes earlier guidance on message from Secretary to Costa Mendez.<sup>7</sup>

**Haig**

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<sup>6</sup> Following a telephone conversation with Service, Shlaudeman conveyed this message for Galtieri to Costa Mendez. In telegram 1892 from Buenos Aires, sent at 1802Z on April 1, Shlaudeman reported that he “stressed” to Costa Mendez “the importance we attach to the developing relationship between our two countries and the heavy damage any military action would do to that relationship.” Costa Mendez “made no direct response to my request for assurances re Argentine intentions,” but “did say he realized the seriousness of the message, asked for a non-paper covering it (which I have provided) and said he would get it to the President before my appointment with Galtieri this afternoon.” (Reagan Library, Executive Secretariat, NSC Cable File, Falkland File 03/31/1982–04/01/1982) For a report of Shlaudeman’s meeting with Galtieri, see Document 37.

<sup>7</sup> See footnote 4, Document 29.