

## 79. Telegram From the Embassy in the United Kingdom to the Embassy in Argentina<sup>1</sup>

London, April 9, 1982, 1740Z

7889. For Goldberg from Streator. USDel Secretary. Subject: Memcon: Secretary's Meeting With Foreign Secretary Pym April 8: Falkland Island Crisis.

1. Secret—Entire text.

2. Secretary met at 5 p.m. April 8 at the Commonwealth and Foreign Office with Foreign Secretary Francis Pym to discuss the Falkland Island crisis. Also present were Brian Fall, Private Secretary to the Foreign Secretary, and U.S. Charge Streator.

3. After the Secretary had congratulated Pym on his appointment and Pym had welcomed the Secretary, the latter said it goes without saying that he was in London as a friend; there is no other conception, he said, in the President's mind. Starting his trip in London was a way to demonstrate that. He then would travel to Buenos Aires to demonstrate the consequences to the Argentines of failure to resolve the problem. He assured Pym that there would be no repeat of Suez.

4. Continuing, the Secretary said we've looked at some possibilities for dealing with the Falklands problem but he thought it best to reserve discussion of them for the Prime Minister. Clearly, he said, withdrawal of security forces is the core problem; we needed to see how that can be achieved. At present, there is a window of opportunity; the situation will become more complex as time passes. The degree of Argentine macho already is unprecedented; it might become greater if Galtieri falls.

5. Pym said the Falklands had been under discussion for 15 years. Recently, both sides had met in New York.<sup>2</sup> The British had known nothing until early last week that even suggested the event that occurred last Friday.<sup>3</sup> It had shocked the nation; the fundamental question was whether we should have had forces there. The emergency debate last Saturday<sup>4</sup> had led to an expression of national unanimity and strong criticism that the problem had arisen in the first place. After the weekend the decision was taken to move militarily. He said no

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Department of State, Executive Secretariat, Files of Alexander M. Haig, Jr., 1981–1982, Lot 82D370, No folder. Secret; Immediate; Nodis. A stamped notation indicates the telegram was received in the Department at 4:36 p.m. Haig arrived in London April 8.

<sup>2</sup> See footnote 3, Document 2.

<sup>3</sup> April 2.

<sup>4</sup> April 3. See footnote 2, Document 58.

mistake had been made, but the signs had not been read right and Carrington had done the honorable thing and left.<sup>5</sup> He had been strongly criticized by the parliamentary party. The immediate reaction was one of anger and the fleet was dispatched without knowing what it would do. Pym expressed gratitude for the U.S. position at the UN and said they were approaching the Commonwealth countries to put pressure on the Argentines. The hope was to use the window before the arrival of the fleet to put maximum pressure on the Argentines to force them to withdraw. British objectives were well defined in the UN resolution.<sup>6</sup> British sovereignty existed in the Islands, the Argentines have annexed them and they must be withdrawn. After that, the issues of what to do next and what the Islanders want can be addressed.

6. Pym said the government's "recovery program" was going well, as reflected in this week's debate in Parliament in which the opposition had not done well. "We don't look wobbly," he said. Authority has been returned. Among backbenchers there is less emotion. The feeling in the country is that we cannot let the Argentines get away with it. Throughout Central America and elsewhere the unravelling would be significant if Argentina were to succeed. All would prefer to achieve withdrawal without shots and for that reason maximum pressure must be applied to the Argentines. What the U.S. does there is decisive. Whether it can be done in the time available is the question. In any case, Britain is more stable and will be proceeding more calmly in the days ahead.

7. The Secretary said he believed that the window was not as long as the two weeks before the fleet's arrival. While not departing from the premise of withdrawal—and indeed that was the essence of any temporary solution—the issue was how to accomplish withdrawal without doing violence to the U.K. principles and the work on the longer term issues. Withdrawal was most important. Extensive analysis suggested that the government in Buenos Aires now is in the softest position they will be in. There is some dissent in the military structure.

8. The Secretary noted that the U.S. was caught more by surprise than the British; our people, he said, had not picked up the indicators, except for the submarine reconnaissance. He was not certain whether it was an intelligence failure or a consequence of varying sensitivities. Within hours, though, he had all the material Ambassador Henderson had, integrated it into our material and notified the President. The Secretary said he had sent strong messages that the Argentine Foreign Minister had fended off and that Galtieri had deferred in receiving the

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<sup>5</sup> See footnote 2, Document 61.

<sup>6</sup> See footnote 3, Document 50.

President's call.<sup>7</sup> The Foreign Minister had said it was too late to meet U.S. demands. At that point, they were extremely rigid and totally confident that they would get away with it. On their side were distance, time, surprise, and they had been preparing for months. They could not have done it without bloodshed without having worked for months. The reactions in the U.K. shocked the Argentines, as had those at the United Nations; they are now more divided and their internal problems are mounting. The real difficulty is that after the fleet reaches the fiftieth parallel the Argentines will go to the OAS. While most Latin Americans are outraged by Argentina's action, on the other hand they will be driven to Third World demeanor. The Secretary said he had told Henderson that the OAS meant trouble when Henderson had said the British hoped to have support in that body. In some respects, the Secretary wished the British had not announced a blockade, for that affronts Argentine machismo, but on the other hand it keeps the pressure on.

9. It is necessary, the Secretary said, to work for a solution that avoids confirming Argentina's cowardice; it must be face-saving. While the U.K. is impelled by logic and principle, Argentina moves by macho.

The Secretary said he thought the window was 72 hours. He believed genuinely, he said, that if we don't seize the window, the chances of avoiding bloodshed are dim. Meanwhile, the greater the U.K. investment in the situation the more difficult it will be to deal with in political terms. Pym said he feared that the situation might turn out to be prolonged: more complicated and involving more investment. The Secretary said our desire was to keep the U.K. Government viable. It has always supported US during fifteen months in office.

10. The Secretary said he sought a convergence of view on the criticality of timing. The problem will become more difficult thereafter because of the OAS and the Soviets. The vote in the UN shook Argentina; they thought the Soviets would veto. The Argentine Foreign Minister said that two options were now open: the OAS where they expect success; and the Soviet option. The Soviet option entails analyzing the implications of pursuing the military alternative. The Secretary thought the Argentines would put the fleet in harbor and that the U.K. would face a land-based air problem. Moreover, the Argentines would put the Falklands in a cocoon. The Soviets might offer to fill the gap created by lost fleet assets. Moreover, if possibilities for a political solution are allowed to pass, the U.S. and U.K. press will start to turn.

11. The Secretary continued that the noise out of Buenos Aires is reasonable; for example, they said they were studying the UN resolu-

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<sup>7</sup> See footnote 2, Document 39.

tion. It will be important to use the 72 hours available in a reasonable way. The Secretary noted that the U.S. had avoided "high profile tilts"; but in reality nothing has been done except to tilt toward Britain. He said we are not sending military equipment, we are working on the problem of existing contracts, and doing anything else we can to help. Pym noted that American influence in Argentina is very great. The Secretary said that Argentine self-confidence had been enhanced by collaboration with us in Central America. We cannot let the Argentines believe that this gives them a special dispensation. The issue may be more time-sensitive than the British believe. While it may seem better to let pressure build, he said, it also seemed to him that the U.K. was at a break-point. Perhaps it will become more difficult for Britain as opposition increases and it may be necessary to go to war to protect the principle. He hoped to leave Britain with a sense of what might be possible. He told the Argentines he would not go to Argentina if he were faced with a priori demands on sovereignty and the Argentines said, "come ahead."

12. Pym said that the Prime Minister feels very strongly about withdrawal because it presents a formidable political problem. It was very damaging to have Carrington leave. The rebuilding began in the debate yesterday. Thatcher was splendid throughout and it was a good day. He said the Secretary could expect her to take a strong line; but Pym noted that he had been saying all along that a peaceful solution is needed.

13. The Secretary pointed out that he was prepared to remain for discussions the following day if that would be useful.

14. The core area of the problem, the Secretary said, involves sovereignty and self-determination. He hoped to deal with those issues with the Prime Minister.

15. Pym raised the meeting of the Air Chiefs of Staff in Buenos Aires on April 13. He noted General Allen was to attend.<sup>8</sup> Haig said it was the U.S. view that the meeting should go ahead because it was to address Hemispheric problems. If the U.S. were not there, chances of mischievous discussion of the Falklands issue are great. The other options were to cancel or downgrade the meeting. However if the meeting went ahead it was best to use the highest level with an authoritative voice.

16. Pym suggested the possibility of postponement and the Secretary said he would be very comfortable with that.

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<sup>8</sup> Haig approved Allen's attendance on April 5. See Document 62.

17. Pym said he felt that public opinion in the U.K. could get the wrong impression if the meeting were held. The Secretary concluded that he was prepared to postpone.

18. Returning to the Falklands issue, the Secretary said that if he got an agreement in principle with time certain for the Argentines to withdraw it was clear they must have something in return, but not a return to the status quo ante. He said he conceived the possibility of moving in an impartial authority, perhaps comprising representatives of the U.S. and Canada as two who are acceptable to the parties, together possibly with British and Argentine representatives, to guarantee the rights and interests of the population. Such a mechanism might be involved in dealing with the longer term problem. In that connection, he saw value in avoiding language on sovereignty and self-determination early in the debate and achieving a perception that over time would be negotiated in conformity with the principles of the UN Charter. This could be enough to elicit a commitment to withdraw coming first from Argentina. Meanwhile the British would hold the fleet in readiness and be seen doing that. The Secretary saw a need to work out language that meets British needs for definition of principles.

19. Pym said the plan seemed to have possibilities. However, he said the Secretary would need to persevere with the Prime Minister. For his part, Pym liked the reference to UN principles. If the Prime Minister didn't agree at first, the Secretary should persevere.

20. The Secretary said he thought it would be necessary to deal first with the issue of withdrawal and its conditions, then with the issue of administration and finally with the issue of negotiations and the basis on which they would begin. He saw a need to balance the requirements of self-determination and sovereignty.

21. In conclusion, Pym thanked the Secretary for the information received from the U.S. intelligence and services.

**Streator**