

85. Telegram From President Reagan to Secretary of State Haig¹

Bridgetown, April 9, 1982, 1640Z

10. Ref Secto 5010.² Subject: Your Discussions in London.

1. (TS) The report of your discussions in London makes clear how difficult it will be to foster a compromise that gives Maggie enough to carry on and at the same time meets the test of “equity” with our Latin neighbors. As you expected there isn’t much room for maneuver in the British position. How much this “going-in” position can be influenced is unclear although London headlines give little basis for optimism. Point B looks to be the crux³ and I’d be interested in your further thinking on how a multinational presence might be made more appealing in London. It’s my guess from the diffident British stance that any compromise on Thatcher’s part will take time. If that’s true the closure of the British submarines is all the more worrisome. In this regard, whether we can expect Galtieri to have the wisdom and strength to keep his distance is obviously a central near-term issue.

2. (TS) On a separate subject, I was struck by reporting from Tel Aviv that Begin is moving Soviet tanks to the northern border.⁴ Recognizing you have your hands full, I’d appreciate your views on whether another intervention from us would be useful or not.

3. (TS) Here, we had useful sessions in Jamaica and Barbados.⁵ What struck me most was that while they are interested in the contents of the CBI, through it we have achieved the larger purpose of a breakthrough in U.S. credibility in this part of the world. Their confidence that finally we care is a fragile but terribly important achievement for which you should be very proud.

¹ Source: Reagan Library, Executive Secretariat, NSC Country File, Latin America/Central, Falklands War [Cables 090131, 091000, 091154, 091640, 181715, 191650, 191754, 192115]. Top Secret. Sent for information to the White House. Printed from a copy that was received in the White House Situation Room. Reagan was in Barbados for meetings with the Prime Ministers of Barbados, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, St. Christopher and Nevis, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. He had arrived in Barbados on April 8, following a brief official visit to Jamaica. A notation in Poindexter’s handwriting in the top right-hand corner of the telegram reads: “Judge—JP,” indicating that Poindexter forwarded the telegram to Clark. A stamped notation indicates that Clark saw it.

² See Document 82.

³ See paragraph 8B of of Document 82.

⁴ For documentation on U.S. responses to the mounting crisis in Lebanon, see *Foreign Relations, 1981–1988*, vol. XVIII, Part 1, Lebanon, April 1981–August 1982.

⁵ For documentation relating to Reagan’s discussions in Jamaica and Barbados, as well as other documentation related to the Caribbean Basin Initiative, see *Foreign Relations, 1981–1988*, vol. XVII, Part 1, Mexico; Western Caribbean, and *Foreign Relations, 1981–1988*, vol. XVII, Part 2, Eastern Caribbean.

4. (TS) On the press line you propose with respect to the Falklands, I agree. We are saying nothing from here to color expectations.

5. (TS) As you proceed to Buenos Aires, I'm very conscious of the enormity of the task. I'd appreciate a call on the secure line when you have a chance to discuss where things might lead in the days ahead.

Warm regards.