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13 April, 1982

ARGENTINA: BRITISH COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Thank you for your letter of 9 April.
As I told you on the telephone today the Prime Minister agrees that a reply should be sent to the message from the Chairman of the British Community Council in the terms of the text enclosed with this letter.

A. J. COLES

John Holmes, Esq
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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"Dear Mr Murchison,

Thank you for your telegram about the British Community in Argentina.

I recognise the consideration which Argentine governments have shown to the British community in Argentina, who have - I know - contributed much to the prosperity and development of that country. We have long valued our relations with Argentina.

You will understand, however, that there can be no question of our failing to respond to the unprovoked aggression by the Argentine Government in its invasion of the Falkland Islands and their dependencies, and its attempt to settle by force the long-standing dispute between us.

The Argentine action has been condemned by the UN Security Council, which has passed by an overwhelming majority a mandatory resolution calling on Argentina to withdraw, as well as by very many other governments around the world. It is our earnest hope that the Argentine Government will heed this call and withdraw its forces.

The British Government seeks a peaceful solution and will pursue all possible means of securing one. But there must be no doubt of our determination to re-assert British administration over the Falkland Islands.

I realise with deep regret that this situation may cause anxieties for British people living in Argentina. That is why we have been advising people to consider leaving the country by normal commercial means. It is, of course, for individuals to decide how to respond to this advice.

I earnestly believe that only firmness and resolution will contribute to the maintenance of the rule of law and the preservation of peace both in the South Atlantic and in the wider world.

With best wishes.

Margaret Thatcher."