

MR Bosley NO 10

JACK ANDERSON (AMERICAN JOURNALIST) - Tapes Of Conversations Between
President Reagan And Mr Alexander Haig.

Transcript from BBC Radio 4, Today Programme. 16 April 1982.

PRESENTER: Jack Anderson, one of America's best known investigative journalists, has managed to listen to taped conversations between President Reagan and Mr Alexander Haig while Mr Haig was in London for the Falkland negotiations. It's a remarkable revelation of the way the President's mind was working on the problem and what he thought of Mrs Thatcher's attitude. Earlier this morning Jack Anderson gave me the gist of this supposedly private conversation.

ANDERSON: President Reagan was giving instructions to the Secretary of State. In these instructions the President indicated some concern about the state of British emotion; he asked the Secretary whether the emotion that he encountered in his meetings in London extended beyond the officials to the people; he was told that the feelings were strong in Britain. Then he made a rather amazing statement about whether the British would be appeased if their submarine, which is located in the area, should sink an Argentine ship. What he said was (and I'll read to you the direct quote)

'That submarine of their's, do you think it's apt to go ahead with retribution and sink anything within the 200 miles and would that be enough to vindicate them?'

And at another point he urges the Secretary of State to bring pressure upon the Argentine leaders to exercise restraint. Reagan offered to take the blame for putting on the pressure. He used the kind of words that a Western hero in the movies might use; he said (and this is a direct quote)

'In those talks, if it's helpful at all, don't hold back on making me the bad guy and insisting on restraint if that's necessary'.

PRESENTER: Well what was Mr Haig's reply on the question about the submarine and sinking an Argentine ship?

ANDERSON: Basically he was saying that the Argentinians were exercising a little bit more restraint than the British; that the British were implacable.

PRESENTER: Was he saying anything about the sticking point in the negotiations where he couldn't get agreement?

ANDERSON: No, there wasn't too much of that, at least nothing that we don't all know about that hasn't been made in public. He was talking about the multi-national peace force, the problems of establishing it, whether or not the British wanted a skirmish. Reagan suggested that that they would want a skirmish, that they seemed to want to vindicate themselves.

PRESENTER: Did you get the impression from these tapes that he still has hopes of reaching a solution?

ANDERSON: Yes he calls it, in the tapes, a tough problem; he calls it an uphill fight; he wishes the Secretary of State good luck; he still obviously hopes that the Secretary will be successful in averting a naval showdown over the Falkland Islands.