

## 148. Telegram From Secretary of State Haig to the Department of State<sup>1</sup>

Buenos Aires, April 19, 1982, 0829Z

Secto 6044. From the Secretary to the President. Department please pass to the White House. Subject: Message to the President From Secretary Haig.

It is now 3 a.m. and I have returned to the hotel after another 12 hours of up and down talks.<sup>2</sup> Once again we were treated to the now familiar Argentine tactic whereby with agreement almost in hand the Junta stepped in and overruled its negotiators.<sup>3</sup>

There followed a soulful meeting at 10 p.m. with President Galtieri who then reconvened the Junta and the impasse was broken. We returned to the negotiating table and put together a draft text except for the single important paragraph covering the modalities for the respective withdrawal of forces. However, the text as it now stands will in all likelihood give the British genuine problems.<sup>4</sup>

We resume our talks later this morning at the Casa Rosada. At the conclusion of the round, I should be in a position to recommend—on the basis of the text then in hand—whether to proceed to London for consultations with Prime Minister Thatcher and her Ministers or to return to Washington briefly en route to London. As of the evening I

---

<sup>1</sup> Source: Reagan Library, Executive Secretariat, NSC Country File, Latin America/Central, Argentina (04/18/1982–04/19/1982). Secret; Sensitive; Flash; Nodis. Reagan initialed the telegram, indicating that he saw it. Earlier, Haig had sent a similar summary of the day's discussions to Pym in telegram Secto 6043 to London, April 19. (Reagan Library, Executive Secretariat, NSC Cable File, Falkland File 04/19/1982 (1))

<sup>2</sup> No memoranda of conversation of the April 18 discussions have been found. In his memoirs, Haig wrote of the day's negotiations at the Casa Rosada: "On every decision, the government apparently had to secure the unanimous consent of every corps commander in the army and of their equivalents in the navy and air force. Progress was made by syllables and centimeters and then vetoed by men who had never been part of the negotiations. Ten hours of haggling failed to produce a workable text. The Argentines could not agree on the very point the junta had granted the day before: withdrawal of forces. The staffs on both sides were half asleep. At ten in the evening, Galtieri drew me aside. 'If I lay it all on the line,' he said, 'I won't be here.' I asked him how long he thought he would survive if he lost a war to the British." (Haig, *Caveat*, p. 289)

<sup>3</sup> Reagan underlined the portion of this sentence beginning with the word "almost."

<sup>4</sup> Haig later recalled: "[B]y 2:40 a.m. on April 19, we had produced a draft, acceptable to the Argentinians, providing for an immediate cessation of hostilities and the withdrawal of forces, an Argentine presence on the island under a U.S. guarantee, and negotiations leading to a resolution of the question by December 31, 1982. I believed that Mrs. Thatcher would have great difficulty in accepting this text." (Haig, *Caveat*, p. 289) A copy of the draft is in the Department of State, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Miscellaneous Files, March 1981–February 1983, Lot 83D210, D. Gompert.

think the latter would be the wrong course as it would break our momentum and start press leaking. I'll provide you a detailed message tomorrow when we are airborne after the hectic pace of activity subsides.<sup>5</sup>

**Haig**

---

<sup>5</sup> See Document 150.