

**151. Telegram From Secretary of State Haig to the Embassy in the United Kingdom, the Department of State, and the White House<sup>1</sup>**

Buenos Aires, April 19, 1982, 1620Z

Secto 6046. Subject: Letter to Pym.

1. Secret—Entire text.

2. Dear Francis

3. Here as you suggest in your latest message<sup>2</sup> is the current text, along with our gloss on what it means. Costa Mendez has given me a letter saying that Argentina could accept it if the U.S. proposes it, and Britain accepts.<sup>3</sup>

4. My own disappointment with this text prevents me from attempting to influence you in any way. As you will see, there are significant steps back from the text you and I discussed in London in each of the areas of greatest importance: the longterm negotiations, the interim administration, and withdrawal.<sup>4</sup>

5. What has been secured in each case is British control. You would undertake to negotiate and conclude a long term agreement, but your principles as well as Argentine principles are asserted, and there is nothing in the agreement (as the Argentines keep reminding us) that forces you to accept a negotiated settlement you don't want.

---

<sup>1</sup> Source: Reagan Library, Executive Secretariat, NSC Country File, Latin America/Central, Falklands War [Cables 090131, 091000, 091154, 091640, 181715, 191620, 191740, 191754, 192115]. Secret; Flash; Nodis. A stamped notation in the upper right-hand corner of the first page of the telegram indicates that Clark saw it.

<sup>2</sup> At 1307Z, April 19, the Embassy in London forwarded Pym's response to Haig's previous message (see footnote 1, Document 148). In it, Pym stated: "I remain full of admiration for your persistence in pressing the Argentines to reach a settlement based on the Security Council resolution. But I am deeply concerned by your comment that there will be some problems for us in what you describe as 'the maximum obtainable from the Argentines.'" Pym continued, "In your previous message you said that you would in all circumstances consult us before moving to London or Washington. In view of your latest message, I am sure that the time for this has come. You will understand that we need to think carefully about anything which you may have worked out with the Argentines before giving you our views. I should therefore be most grateful if you could send me as soon as possible a full account of where things stand and in particular the text now under discussion." (Telegram 8387 from London, April 19; Reagan Library, Executive Secretariat, NSC Country File, Europe and Soviet Union, United Kingdom (04/01/1982-07/31/1982) (2))

<sup>3</sup> Haig apparently wrote prematurely about receiving the letter, which was to be delivered by Costa Méndez at the airport. When Haig met with Pym in Washington on April 22, he reported that Costa Méndez had failed to provide the letter to him upon Haig's departure from Buenos Aires (see Document 163). For a description of the April 19 airport meeting between Haig and Costa Méndez, see Footnote 2, Document 152.

<sup>4</sup> See Tab A of Document 112.

6. The interim administration is less advantageous than it was, yet here again the essential is saved. The local councils remain sovereign. Recommendations to you on more intercourse with the mainland requires a quick response, but can be turned down. If the temporary administration lasts, it will give full protection to the Islanders.

7. Finally, the withdrawal deal leaves you protected. Your submarines would be outside 150 nautical mile maximum—but they are your guarantee, and 150 NM is only five hours running time. The fleet must stand off to 1750 NM by seven days after agreement, but it could steam at 12 knots some 2100 NM after agreement, and thus in most cases (depending on when agreement were to take place) go on steaming towards the Falklands after agreement.

8. Francis, I do not know whether more can be wrung out of the Argentines. It is not clear who is in charge here, as many as 50 people, including corps commanders, may be exercising vetos. Certainly, I can do no better at this point.

9. I would not presume to speculate on the equities seen from your point of view. From mine, the agreement, if accepted, would involve the Argentines far more intimately in the affairs of the Islands, yet leave you in charge of the current situation and the ultimate destiny. Above all, Argentina, the United States and United Kingdom would be bound together in the search for an evolutionary solution to the problem, with obvious future costs to each of us if it cannot be found. Only you can judge that outcome against the advantages and disadvantages of armed action.

10. My best immediate judgement in this situation is that I should return to Washington and report to the President. I am available, of course, to go on immediately from there to London, or even to divert from Washington to London, if you wish.

11. Leaving here, I will refuse to characterize the text, and say only that I have finished this phase of my effort, and am returning to Washington to report to the President. I will say that I have given you a full report of the results of my stay in Buenos Aires.<sup>5</sup>

12. I would be deeply grateful if you would be in touch with me before taking any public or other action on the results I am transmitting.

13. Text by septel.<sup>6</sup>

Warm regards, Al.

End message.

**Haig**

---

<sup>5</sup> For the text Haig's statement on leaving Buenos Aires, see the Department of State *Bulletin*, June 1982, p. 84.

<sup>6</sup> See Document 152.