

## 153. Telegram From Secretary of State Haig to the Embassy in Argentina<sup>1</sup>

April 20, 1982, 0400Z

Secto 6057. Subject: Letter to Costa Mendez.

1. Secret, entire message.
2. Begin quote: Dear Nicanor:
3. I have the first British reaction to the paper developed in Buenos Aires.<sup>2</sup> It is one of disappointment. London, of course, reserves pending

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Reagan Library, Executive Secretariat, NSC Cable File, Falkland File 04/20/1982 (1). Secret; Flash; Nodis. Sent for information Flash to the Department of State and White House. Sent from the Secretary's aircraft. Haig was then en route to Washington from Buenos Aires. The telegram is unsigned.

<sup>2</sup> See Document 152. Regarding this draft, Pym wrote to Haig: "Your herculean efforts have clearly met with a firm determination on the part of the Argentines to hold on to what they have taken by force. We are deeply disturbed by their intransigence." "First reading of the draft," he later continued, "leaves the clear impression that the sovereignty issue is greatly weakened from our point of view, that the withdrawal is on a very unequal basis in favour of the Argentines and that the wishes of the Islanders are not protected. You know the basic principles on which we have been working here, and I fear that on any interpretation of the text they cannot be met. On the next immediate steps I am sure that you are right to go to Washington and report to the President." Pym also provided Haig with the text of off-the-record press guidance that indicated that the British Government would be "studying" the Argentine proposals before getting in touch with Haig. (Telegram 8484 from London, April 20; Reagan Library, Executive Secretariat, NSC Cable File, Falkland File 04/20/1982 (1))

careful study, but it finds the basis for withdrawal "very unequal," it believes that the sovereignty issue is tilted too much, and above all it finds that the wishes of the Islanders are not protected.

4. London is putting out a restrained press line putting the emphasis on failure to regard as paramount the wishes of the Islanders, but not closing the door.

5. I shall be in a better position to advise you tomorrow on specific British problems, but I would urge you already to pass this first reaction on to your colleagues in the government. It is clear to me that substantially further mutual adjustment will be necessary if war is to be avoided.

6. When I have seen the British position in detail I will be in touch on possible next steps.

7. Warm regards. Al Haig. End quote.

8. Action requested: London complains that Buenos Aires is putting out line that US and Argentina have an agreement. Please report tonight on that. Please inform Costa Mendez that we will correct if that impression is left.

9. Re your BA 2343,<sup>3</sup> you are absolutely right to decline to go over the text. Our letter is clear.

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<sup>3</sup> In telegram 2343 from Buenos Aires, April 20, Shlaudeman reported: "Costa Mendez is meeting with the Junta (21:55 hrs) on what his office described to me as the 'disturbing news from London' (the statement from No. 10)." "The question now arises," he continued, "as to what you would want me to do when he comes back, as he is perfectly capable of doing, to plead misunderstanding and ask to go over the texts. My inclination would be to give him ours and to say that I am not, rpt not, authorized to discuss it further." (Department of State, Central Foreign Policy File, N820004-0029)