

168. Action Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Enders) and the Permanent Representative to the Organization of American States (Middendorf) to Secretary of State Haig¹

Washington, April 23, 1982

SUBJECT

Falkland Islands: Preparing for the Rio Treaty MFM

ISSUE FOR DECISION

In advance of the Organ of Consultation (MFM) meeting called by Argentina for Monday, April 26,² *we should try to ensure that the Latin American governments, particularly Argentina,³ know what our position is with respect to the MFM.*

ESSENTIAL FACTORS

The Argentines have succeeded in convening the Organ of Consultation under the Rio Treaty to, in the language of the OAS resolution, “consider the grave situation that has arisen in the South Atlantic.”⁴ The twenty-one Foreign Ministers, or their accredited representatives, are to begin deliberations Monday, April 26, unless hostilities prompt the GOA to ask for an earlier meeting. *Once the Organ begins, we expect the GOA, at a minimum, to attempt to gain approval for a resolution which would:*

—*Recognize Argentina’s sovereignty over the Falklands;*

—*Call on both parties to use only peaceful means to resolve their dispute, and refrain from the threat or use of force (possibly tied to a “truce” period as earlier proposed by Peru);*

¹ Source: Department of State, Central Foreign Policy File, P900009–0736. Secret; Exdis. Drafted by Briggs and Johnson; cleared by Thompson. Copies were sent for information to ARA/PPC and ARA/RPP. A stamped notation at the top of the memorandum indicates that Haig saw it.

² On a separate action memorandum, sent by Enders to Haig on April 23, Haig approved a recommendation made by ARA and USOAS designating Middendorf to act as U.S. Special Delegate to the OAS Meeting of Foreign Ministers (MFM). “If you are associated with such a debacle,” Enders wrote to Haig on the latter’s need to decline attendance at the MFM, “it could damage your ability (in British eyes) to carry on your mediation efforts.” (Department of State, Central Foreign Policy File, P820080–0707) Ultimately, Haig attended the MFM on April 26.

³ On April 23, Middendorf telephoned Quijano and “stressed” his “hope that he would agree with me [Middendorf] that nothing should occur” in the MFM “which would impair Secretary Haig’s peace efforts.” In response, Quijano “said he fully agreed and that he was heartened by the progress in the talks to date.” (Memorandum of Telephone Conversation, April 23; Department of State, Central Foreign Policy File, P820080–0712)

⁴ See footnote 2, Document 158.

—*Call on all States (i.e., the EC and NATO) to refrain from any action supportive of the U.K.*

—*Call on the U.K. to remove their fleet from the Rio Treaty area, recognize Argentine sovereignty, and cease threatening Argentina; and/or*

—*Call on extra-Hemispheric states and organizations (i.e., the EC) to cease economic coercion against Argentina.*

The LA's would probably be able to support any or all of these except the last, where several might fall off, but not enough to block passage.

If hostilities have occurred, Argentina would doubtless call for sanctions, such as breaking diplomatic and economic relations, and for collective security measures. In this case, it would be a close vote.⁵ Besides the U.S., seven others would have to oppose or abstain to kill the resolution: Mexico, Panama, Colombia, Chile, Trinidad, Brazil, and Haiti might oppose for a variety of reasons, including in the case of Mexico and Panama, a clear preference for UN primacy.

We are under no illusions that chances are very good for shaping an outcome that could be supportive, potentially helpful or at least not detrimental, to our peace effort. *It seems unlikely the MFM would be willing simply to reaffirm support for the peace effort, along the lines of last week's OAS resolution.⁶*

A paper outlining in greater detail strategy options for the MFM will be in your hands later today.⁷

In the meantime, to prepare for Monday's Organ of Consultation, we believe *groundwork should be laid now* with the Rio Treaty signatories. A cable starting the process is attached.⁸

⁵ In a telephone conversation concerning the MFM, April 22, Middendorf "urged" Thomas "to press hard for major British efforts with the Latin states where the U.K. has some leverage." Middendorf added that the United States "would continue to work for a moderate outcome and no censure from the OAS but that if hostilities break out the going will get considerably tougher." Thomas responded that his government "has worked hard behind the scenes with Mexico, Venezuela, Costa Rica, Chile, and Honduras," but "emphasized that his government was not foreclosing the military option as a device to bring the Argentines to the conference table more quickly." (Memorandum of April 22 Telephone Conversation, April 23; Department of State, Central Foreign Policy File, P820080-0710)

⁶ Reference is presumably to OAS Resolution 359 adopted on April 13. See footnote 2, Document 113.

⁷ See Document 172.

⁸ Attached but not printed is a draft telegram providing a list of talking points to the Chiefs of Mission in OAS member countries and instructing them to consult with officials "at highest appropriate Foreign Ministry levels" to "ensure that the results of Monday's Organ of Consultation support the peace process and not degenerate into either a censuring of the UK which we would have to resist or, even worse, a search for punitive sanctions against the UK which we would have to oppose." (Department of State, Central Foreign Policy File, P900009-0739)

Recommendation

That you approve the cable attached.⁹

⁹ Haig initialed his approval on April 24. The telegram was transmitted as telegram 111197 to all American Republic diplomatic posts, April 24. (Department of State, Central Foreign Policy File, D840780–0318)