

204. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Brazil¹

Washington, May 2, 1982, 1530Z

118569. Subject: Letter to President Figueiredo.

Following is text of letter from President Reagan to President Figueiredo.² Request Embassy arrange delivery at earliest appropriate time. There will be no signed original. If queried Embassy may advise GOB that we do not intend to release text but would have no objection if GOB wishes to do so.

Begin text: Dear Mr. President:

It was with a very heavy heart that I acted April 30 to register the clear opposition of the United States Government to Argentina's use of force to establish its claim to sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands. This was a painful decision, deferred for several weeks, and one which we had hoped could be avoided. It became unavoidable after our efforts to help both parties find a peaceful solution had failed to prevent increasing prospects of armed conflict.

Please understand, Mr. President, that the measures ordered on April 30 relate only to the issue of the use of force to resolve territorial disputes. This is a serious violation of fundamental law which cannot be accepted without grave peril to the peace and the integrity of the Hemisphere and the entire world order.

The United States has taken no position on the issue of sovereignty over the Islands or any of the associated questions. It is our judgement that a peaceful resolution of the basic issues is achievable only through

¹ Source: Reagan Library, Executive Secretariat, NSC Cable File, Falkland File 05/02/1982. Confidential; Sensitive; Niact Immediate; Nodis. Sent for information Immediate to Buenos Aires and the White House. Printed from a copy that was received in the White House Situation Room. Drafted by Kilday; cleared by Einaudi, Enders, McFarlane, Fontaine, Bremer, and in S/S-O; approved by Haig. (Department of State, Central Foreign Policy File, [no film number])

² Variations of this letter were sent to Presidents Royo, Herrera Campíns, and Belaúnde on May 2. In a May 1 memorandum to Clark, forwarding drafts for approval, Bremer noted: "Initial reactions of Latin governments to U.S. actions [in the South Atlantic crisis] reflect concern about continued U.S. commitment to the inter-American system. Many predict a weakening of hemispheric relationships." The purpose of the letters would be to "answer these concerns and to keep opinion from crystallizing against us." (Reagan Library, Latin American Affairs Directorate Files, NSC, Falklands/Malvinas: NSC & State Memos, 1982) Telegram 118568 to Caracas and Panama City, May 2, transmitted the letters to Royo and Herrera Campíns. (Ibid.) Reagan's letter to Belaúnde, sent to Lima in telegram 118571, May 2, added that he was "particularly appreciative" of Belaúnde's efforts to "gain agreement by the Government of Argentina for a peace plan that would prevent further conflict and provide for a definitive solution to the problem." (Ibid.)

negotiations between the interested parties. However, such negotiations can only proceed under a climate of mutual respect for the rule of law.

Like Brazil, the United States believes that UN Security Council Resolution 502 provides the framework in which this crisis must be addressed. We are pledged to continue to do everything in our power, including resumption of the mediation effort if the parties so wish, to help establish the basis for a negotiated settlement and to prevent this crisis from reaching tragic proportions.

Your long-awaited visit to Washington May 12 will provide opportunity for a further exchange of views on the crisis as well as a review of other international and hemispheric issues of mutual interest.³ We look forward to your arrival with great anticipation and know that we will benefit from your counsel. Sincerely yours, Ronald Reagan.
End text.

Haig

³ See Document 255.