

220. Message From British Foreign Secretary Pym to Secretary of State Haig¹

London, May 4, 1982

Begins:

I found our discussions in Washington² very useful and am grateful for the continuing efforts you are making to promote a peaceful settlement of the Falklands crisis.

I have discussed with the Prime Minister and other colleagues the ideas you put to Nicko Henderson last night.³ I am conscious, like you, of the value of simplicity in any new diplomatic initiative. If further

¹ Source: Department of State, Executive Secretariat, S/S Special Handling Restrictions Memos 1979–1983, Lot 96D262, ES Sensitive May 1–5 1982. UK Secret. Henderson sent the message to Haig under a May 4 covering note. The message was included as part of a set of briefing materials prepared for the May 5 NSPG meeting. Bremer sent these materials to Haig under a May 5 covering note. (Ibid.)

² See Document 205.

³ See footnote 6, Document 212.

conflict is to be avoided and our essential aims are to be met, negotiations must not drag on. At the same time, we cannot accept a ceasefire on the basis of an agreement that is too imprecise. Otherwise, Argentina could accept the proposal, and thus escape military pressure, and then play for time in negotiations and prolong the occupation.

I attach a somewhat expanded version of your points, which takes account of this consideration. Because the provisions on withdrawal and the involvement of third parties in the interim period are expressed more fully, we have omitted your sixth point giving a role to the contact group in negotiations to carry out the interim agreement. We have also gone back to a contact group composed of only Brazil, Peru, the Federal Republic of Germany and the United States, which is the list given by Peru to our Ambassador on 3 May. I take it that the United States and Peru would approach Brazil and the FRG about their participation. In our view the group should work by consensus and have US or rotating chairmanship. We have also provided a version of the final point which takes account of the plain fact that it might prove impossible to reach agreement on the future of the Falkland Islands by 30 April 1983.

If you and the Peruvian Government were to call upon Argentina and Britain to accept within 48 hours an agreement in the terms I am enclosing, the British Government would immediately announce that our naval forces in the South Atlantic had been given orders not to fire within or outside the TEZ unless directly threatened by Argentine ships or aircraft but that we would revert to earlier rules of engagement if Argentina failed to accept your proposals within 48 hours. We would need from you an advance assurance that Argentina at the same time would announce that the same orders had been issued to her forces and that her ships and aircraft would not be present in the TEZ in the 48 hour period.

As you know it is essential for the British Government that there should be a United States guarantee of the security of the Falkland Islands. It would need to last from the 7th day after the signature of an interim agreement until the implementation of a definitive agreement about the future status of the Islands, and perhaps beyond. For this to deter Argentina, the government in Buenos Aires must be in no doubt of the guarantee. That suggests that it might take the form of a public statement by the US Administration at the time when the interim agreement entered into force.

Subject to your very early comments I would like out of courtesy to give these ideas direct to the Peruvian President.

Ends.

Attachment

Draft Proposal Prepared By the British Government⁴

London, undated

1. An immediate ceasefire, concurrent with:
2. Mutual withdrawal of forces:
 - (a) Argentine and British forces to begin immediately to withdraw from an area of 200 nautical miles radius from the Falkland Islands and to refrain from introducing any forces into that area.
 - (b) The UK will ensure safe passage for the Argentine garrison to the mainland.
 - (c) All British and Argentine forces to be withdrawn within 7 days from the area of 200 nautical miles radius from the Falklands and to remain outside that area.
3. The immediate introduction of a contact group composed of Brazil, Peru, The Federal Republic of Germany and the United States into the Falkland Islands on a temporary basis pending agreement on a definitive settlement, the group's tasks being:
 - (a) To verify the withdrawal.
 - (b) To ensure that no actions are taken in the Islands, by the restored administration or otherwise, which would contravene this interim agreement.
4. Britain and Argentina acknowledge the existence of differing and conflicting views regarding the status of the Falkland Islands.
5. The two governments agree that the views of the Islanders must be determined, and that their interests and wishes must be respected in the definitive settlement of the status of the Islands.
6. The two governments will make every possible effort in good faith to reach a definitive agreement prior to 30 April 1983. The countries represented in the contact group will give every assistance in this.

⁴ UK Secret.