

222. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in the United Kingdom¹

Washington, May 5, 1982, 0606Z

121030. For the Ambassador from the Secretary. Subject: Letter to Francis Pym.

1. Please deliver at opening of business Wednesday² the following message from me to Francis Pym:

Dear Francis:

I appreciate the efforts your government has made to react quickly to the suggestion we made.³ But I must tell you with a candor possible only between closest allies that the ideas you have conveyed can lead to only one outcome: Argentine rejection and therefore resumption of hostilities after the forty-eight-hour period, with the prospects for eventual settlement having been damaged in the process. Beyond that, we have no reason to believe that the Peruvian Government would associate itself with your proposal. Indeed, our assessment is that even presenting it to them would drive Peru to a more pro-Argentine posture.

Tragic as recent events have been, I believe we now have an opportunity to achieve an agreement which is consistent with our shared principles and impossible to construe as a success for the aggressor. Your willingness to offer a 48-hour pause makes that opportunity all the more real. We may not have another such chance before many more lives have been lost—if then.

I am sending you a revised version of the seven points which attempts to take more of your concerns into account. As Nicko will explain, it includes our best effort to meet your concerns about a security guarantee. I will not deny that it is closer to the ideas we sent you⁴ than to those you sent us. The most important difference between your ideas and ours is not that ours abandon principle and reward aggression, for they do not, but rather that ours have a reasonable chance of acceptance provided the Argentines are now of a mind to

¹ Source: Reagan Library, Executive Secretariat, NSC Country File, Latin America/Central, Falklands War (04/22/1982–05/17/1982). Secret; Niact Immediate; Nodis. Sent for information Niact Immediate to the White House. A stamped notation at the top of the telegram indicates that Clark saw it. Printed from a copy that was received in the White House Situation Room. Drafted by Gompert; cleared by Bremer and Stern; approved by Haig. (Department of State, Central Foreign Policy File, [no film number])

² May 5.

³ See Document 220.

⁴ See Document 212.

show greater flexibility. While I remain doubtful that they would accept ours, I am certain they will reject yours.

In particular:

—The arrangements for withdrawal of forces do not provide for the parity that was embodied in the plan we discussed when you were in Washington a week or so ago.⁵

—The explicit reference to quote restored administration unquote is both unnecessary and, in and of itself, enough to guarantee rejection.

—The formulation on self-determination would be no less difficult for the Argentines to accept than it would be for you—or us—to accept a flat assurance of eventual Argentine sovereignty.

—The commitment only to make every possible effort to reach a definitive settlement would be read in Buenos Aires as a recipe for stalemate, even though I do not doubt for one minute that HMG would negotiate in good faith. I also attach a proposed timetable for moving this initiative forward which I discussed with Nicko.⁶ I hardly need to say that we have left no doubt about where we stand: the Argentines committed aggression; they have been inflexible in negotiations; and the US supports the UK, explicitly and concretely. We have never contemplated asking you to agree to anything that would undermine the rule of law, weaken our relationship, or be seen as less than a success for your country and your government. It is in this spirit that I must tell you that we are prepared to proceed on the basis of the revised version I am sending to you, but could not associate ourselves with your version.

Recognizing the burden it places on you, may I ask that you give me an indication as quickly as possible as to whether you would like us to proceed.

Sincerely, Al

⁵ See Document 205.

⁶ After he had received Pym's May 4 message (see Document 220) as well as the news about the May 4 sinking of the British destroyer HMS *Sheffield* by Argentine aircraft (see Document 224), Haig met with Henderson at the Department on the evening of May 4 to discuss the U.S.-Peruvian proposals. No U.S. record of this meeting has been found, although Henderson's telegraphed report of the meeting is published on the Thatcher Foundation website. In his published diary, Henderson described the meeting as a "tense" three-hour session in which Haig "implored" him to accept the seven-point plan. Haig, Henderson wrote, "torpedoed our proposals as being quite unnegotiable with either the Peruvians or Argentinians. I had to tell him once again how strongly Mrs Thatcher felt on some of the issues, e.g., respect for the wishes of the inhabitants of the islands and the restoration of the previous administration. Al said that if we were seen to be missing the chance for peace we would lose much US and world sympathy." "Al was in a very nervous state, barking at anyone who entered the room. He allowed Enders to join us; Enders was practical in suggesting language that might bridge the gap. Al kept insisting that it was not a question of language but of principle." (Henderson, *Mandarin*, pp. 456–457)

Attachment 1: Text of proposal.

1. An immediate ceasefire, concurrent with:
2. Mutual withdrawal and non-reintroduction of forces, according to a schedule to be established by the contact group.
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 contact group will assume responsibility for:
 - (A) Verification of the withdrawal;
 - (B) Ensuring that no actions are taken in the Islands, by the local administration, which would contravene this interim agreement; and
 - (C) Ensuring that all other provisions of the agreement are respected.
4. Britain and Argentina acknowledge the existence of differing and conflicting views regarding the status of the Falkland Islands.
5. The two governments acknowledge that the aspirations and interests of the Islanders will be included in the definitive settlement of the status of the Islands.
6. The contact group will have responsibility for ensuring that the two governments reach a definitive agreement prior to April 30, 1983.

Attachment 2: Proposed timetable.

May 5—1200 EDT—London to reply to Washington. US transmits the proposal to Lima and requests an answer not later than May 6 at 1200 EDT.

May 6—1200 EDT—US and Peru transmit the single text to London and BA. On receipt, London announces that it will order a cease fire beginning May 7 at 1200 EDT provided Argentina accepts this procedure, takes similar action and notifies Peru and the US it will do so.

May 7—1200 EDT—Cease fire begins.

May 8—1200 EDT—Both parties must have replied accepting the proposals. If not, each party is free to revert to earlier rules of engagement.

Haig