

236. Information Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Enders) to Secretary of State Haig¹

Washington, May 6, 1982

SUBJECT

Latin Reaction to Falklands Developments

U.S. support for Britain has shaken Latin America. With the notable exceptions of Venezuela, Nicaragua, and Peru, official criticism publicly has been muted. But in private, many Latin leaders were shocked by what they saw as an abrupt U.S. shift that jeopardizes the Inter-American system.

¹ Source: Department of State, Central Foreign Policy File, P820108-0125. Confidential. Drafted by J.W. Swigert (FWG); cleared by W. Lofstrom (INR/IAA), D. Johnson (P), Briggs, S. Block (ARA/AND), Kilday, Einaudi, G. Jones (ARA/RPP), and Service. Swigert initialed for all clearing officials except Service, who initialed his clearance. Haig initialed at the top of the memorandum, indicating that he saw it. A stamped notation also indicates that Haig saw the memorandum.

The sinking of the *Belgrano* helped to solidify sentiment for Argentina. Talk of military assistance to the GOA in Peru, Guatemala and Venezuela² is out in the open, although Herrera is still playing coy. While maintaining official neutrality, Brazil has tilted toward Argentina and responded favorably to an Argentine request to purchase patrol aircraft. Colombia and Costa Rica have counseled moderation, but outgoing Costa Rican President Carazo delivered us a farewell gift with his May 4 suggestion that OAS headquarters be moved out of Washington.

*The President's letter helped.*³ Panama's President Royo assembled Latin American ambassadors to discuss the crisis and read the President's letter to them—a unilateral Panamanian communique which followed omitted criticism of the U.S. But Panama is still active in attempting to drum up a collective Latin response to sanctions toward Argentina.

Individual reactions are colored by specific circumstances (proximity to Argentina, revanchist claims), but *resentment toward the U.S. is simmering*, fueled by latent Anglo-Spanish tensions and nationalism. *Future U.S. relations with the hemisphere will suffer the longer the conflict drags on.*

Attached is a cable providing Latin American reaction by country.⁴

² On May 6, Hayward (as acting Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff) sent a memorandum to Carlucci discussing Venezuela's decision to loan C-130 military cargo aircraft to Argentina, some of which had been sold to the Venezuelan military under FMS, and considering on what basis the United States could object to the decision. Hayward determined that it was "highly conjectural whether the U.S. could object to the temporary provision of these aircraft to Argentina. But over and above that, there is the larger question of whether the U.S. *should* object, regardless of the legalities, to the loan of these aircraft. Our declaration of support for Great Britain and our sanctions against Argentina have exacerbated the already frayed relations with our neighbors to the south. We should probably let this one go by." (Washington National Records Center, OSD Files, FRC 330-84-0003, Argentina (Jan-15 May) 1982)

³ See Document 204 and footnote 2 thereto.

⁴ Attached but not printed. The cable was sent as telegram 123749 to all American Republic diplomatic posts, May 7. (Department of State, Central Foreign Policy File, D850037-0116)