

## 246. Memorandum of Conversation<sup>1</sup>

Washington, May 11, 1982, 10:30 a.m.

### PARTICIPANTS

Esteban Takacs, Argentine Ambassador to the U.S.  
J. William Middendorf, II—U.S. Ambassador to the OAS

Takacs called me this morning after, he said, trying unsuccessfully to reach me at home last night. He said that following a conversation he had with Dick Walters Monday<sup>2</sup> he was afraid the Department misunderstood the GOA's negotiating position. Therefore, Takacs said he wanted to emphasize that there has been a definite Argentine change—Argentina has deliberately de-linked the sovereignty issue from the negotiating process and he asked that I pass this message

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Department of State, Executive Secretariat, Files of Alexander M. Haig, Jr., 1981–1982, Lot 82D370, No folder. Confidential; Limdis. Drafted by Middendorf. Copies were sent to Enders, Bosworth, Briggs, Service, Walters, Bremer, and Haig. At the top of the memorandum, Haig wrote: "Tell Larry to read carefully—for msg. Be *sure* UK *understands*." A typewritten notation below this indicates that Haig's comment was written on May 12. An attached undated note by Goldberg reads: "AMH read en route to Turkey. Key *message*." Haig was in Turkey for meetings with President Evren and other officials May 13–15, before traveling to Greece May 15–16, and then to Luxembourg for a NATO Ministerial Meeting May 16–18.

<sup>2</sup> May 10. No other record of Walters's meeting with Takacs has been found.

on.<sup>3</sup> He said this de-linkage was a major concession since the Argentine public feels strongly that “nobody should take us out of our islands.” Takacs added that he feels with this display of Argentine flexibility the ball is now in the British court. (I pointed out to Takacs my impression that the British also had displayed flexibility on the issue of the future of the inhabitants of the islands.)

COMMENT: (While Takacs clearly wanted to portray to me a flexible GOA, probably in hopes we would pressure the British, he also seemed genuinely fearful that the Department is misreading Argentina on this score. At lunch, Monday, May 10, with GOA OAS Ambassador Quijano, I was the recipient of much the same message. Quijano told me Costa Mendez had called him Saturday the 8th, to ask his view on what sort of instructions Deputy Foreign Minister Ros should have for the UN. Quijano said he had told Costa Mendez that Ros should not bother with the UN unless he was able to present a real sea change in the Argentina position, de-linking sovereignty from negotiations. Quijano told me he strongly believes this is now the GOA’s position. I have politely refrained from asking either for assurances that the Junta is firmly on board with the Foreign Ministry but I would add that both men, so far as I can recall, have been very straight with me.)

On other related subjects, Takacs:

—thought it a hopeful sign that negotiations at the UN now are in their third day;

—expects a cease-fire announcement by the weekend;<sup>4</sup>

—said Henry Kissinger was to meet Pym today to urge the UK to yield on the sovereignty issue;<sup>5</sup>

—reported the Garcia Bustillos-headed Venezuelan delegation in Buenos Aires will offer military aid—but not troops because the GOA hasn’t asked;

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<sup>3</sup> In an interview on CBS-TV’s “Face the Nation” on May 9, Costa Méndez, speaking from Buenos Aires, said that Argentina had no other goal but “sovereignty” over the Falklands, but that sovereignty was “not a precondition” for beginning negotiations with the United Kingdom. (Jackson Diehl, “Argentina Charges Survivors Strafed,” *Washington Post*, May 10, 1982, p. A1) Subsequently, on May 10, Pérez de Cuéllar gave Parsons a draft of the peace agreement then under negotiation that had been prepared by the Argentine UN delegation. Paragraph 2 of the draft states: “The agreement to which the parties commit themselves shall be without prejudice to the rights, claims or positions of the parties.” (Freedman, *Official History*, vol. II, p. 349).

<sup>4</sup> Haig underlined this point and circled it along with the following point. In the right-hand margin next to it, he wrote: “!”

<sup>5</sup> Haig underlined this point and circled it along with the preceding point. In the right-hand margin next to it, he wrote: “!!!!”

—stressed that Argentina doesn't want to internationalize the war, saying, "as you know, we've had offers from others which we have turned down;"<sup>6</sup>

—suggested, that as a signal to the Latins that we wish to avert the growing buildup of animus against us, that the US seek somehow to return to a neutral position before an actual settlement is completed—"even if such a return takes place only five minutes before announcement of a settlement;"<sup>7</sup>

—emphasized (as Quijano also has done) the need to look beyond the immediate problem to ways to rebuild hemispheric solidarity.

Returning to the present state of hostilities and prospects for a cease-fire, Takacs claimed the GOA has been observing a cease-fire for sometime<sup>8</sup>—that the action against the Sheffield was only in retaliation for the Belgrano. He also said that continued British shelling could be a disaster, provoking an escalation in hostilities. He said thus far ten islanders had been killed; many more were in peril if the British do not stop. He said he was very skeptical that by continuous shelling the UK improves chances for a peaceful settlement although no doubt the British have a different viewpoint. He said that if negotiations go on over the next week or longer, and the British at the same time show no signs of halting, he would hope the US would weigh in and ask the UK to stop.<sup>9</sup>

I told Takacs I was heartened by his receptivity to a cease-fire. I told him that speaking very personally as one not involved in the negotiating process, it seemed to me important that any cease-fire should be accompanied immediately by at least a partial withdrawal of forces and that a total withdrawal would be much better. I said such a signal of good will would go a long way to speed the negotiation process. I said a cease-fire without an Argentine pull back probably would not have much appeal to the British.<sup>10</sup>

(COMMENT: I tried to pin Takacs down on this point, knowing that time is against the British military position. He refused to be drawn out, however. Quijano, incidentally, has commented to me that if the UN resolution works, we should be proud since it essentially is little more than the Haig initiative. He also has said that in his opinion the only reason last week's US-Peru initiative fell flat was because neither

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<sup>6</sup> In the right-hand margin next to this point, Haig wrote: "!!!"

<sup>7</sup> Haig underlined most of this point and wrote in the left-hand margin next to it: "Key. They will settle!"

<sup>8</sup> Haig drew a line from this word and wrote "Bull!" in the margin under it.

<sup>9</sup> Haig bracketed this paragraph, drew a line from the bracket to the top of the page, and wrote: "Key message. Keep shelling. Get some reason in B.A.!"

<sup>10</sup> Haig bracketed this paragraph and wrote in the left-hand margin: "Jerk!"

party then believed the other was serious about fighting. Events since have sobered both sides, Quijano said, producing a better climate for a peaceful solution. I told Quijano I was glad at least some realize that it has been the Secretary's efforts which have sown the seeds of peace.)