

254. Message From the Ambassador to Argentina (Shlaudeman) to the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Enders)¹

Buenos Aires, May 12, 1982, 1540Z

[*telegram number not declassified*] For Assistant Secretary Enders from Shlaudeman. Subject: Walters Visit. Ref: [*less than 1 line not declassified*].²

Memorandum of Conversation

Place: Air Force Commander-in-Chief's Office, Buenos Aires

Time: 0800 hours, 11 May 1982³

Present: Brigadier General (Lieutenant General Lami Dozo, Commander-in-Chief of the Argentine Air Force, and Ambassador Vernon Walters)

1. At his request, I⁴ saw General Lami Dozo and explained to him that the Secretary had sent me to express to the Argentines the importance we attach to the relationship between our two countries over the long term and beyond the present situation. He replied that this made him very happy; for he feels strongly that Argentina is part of the West and that relations with the U.S. are of capital and vital importance to Argentina. He said that in the current situation the Soviets are offering equipment and assistance at very low prices; but he realizes that the money is only part of the price for Soviet assistance. The Argentines are not prepared to pay that price. I assured him that the U.S. is not in any way dabbling in internal Argentine affairs, nor will it do so; we had been burned once with the Peron-Braden controversy.⁵ Our main interest is in finding a peaceful and honorable solution for two of our major friends and allies, both of whom are important parts of the free world. He asked me what I thought are the principal difficulties in the negotiations and whether the U.S. objects to the U.N. forum. He said he believes that the UN negotiations are at a dead end.

¹ Source: Department of State, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Miscellaneous Files, March 1981–February 1983, Lot 83D210, Falklands [Folder 1]. Secret; Niact Immediate.

² See footnote 3, Document 253.

³ The meeting actually took place the morning of May 12, the day after Walters's evening meeting with Galtieri. See Document 253.

⁴ Walters.

⁵ Reference is to the 1945 political controversy resulting from charges that U.S. Ambassador Spruille Braden was organizing political opponents of Argentine leader Juan Perón. For documentation relating to this incident, see *Foreign Relations, 1945, The American Republics*, pp. 366–559.

I replied that obviously we would have preferred results from the Haig mediation but we would be delighted to see a just and peaceful solution in any forum. I believed that the principal sticking points are, on the British side, the importance they attach to self-determination for the inhabitants and, on the Argentine side, the demand for recognition of Argentine sovereignty before the negotiations. I believe that we will be able, through the use of the wording "aspirations and wishes" of the inhabitants, to overcome some part of the British objection. I sensed movement on the Argentine side on the precondition of sovereignty. General Lami Dozo said that the sticking point on sovereignty is a result of the contacts the Junta has with the leaders of the political parties. They are the ones who are very tough on this issue, particularly the Peronistas. He believes that for the Argentines the freedom of access and the opening up of the Islands during the interim period before a final settlement is essential. I said the British feel that the Argentines will flood the Islands with Argentines during this period. He said that will not happen but that it is very difficult for the Argentines to accept a requirement for them to have to get a visa from the British to go to the Falklands. He said that it is cosmetically very important that there be equality of rights for Argentines and British. I pointed out to him that the latest proposal, seemingly accepted by the British, would for the first time sever the administrative link between London and the Falklands. Lami Dozo said that it is terribly important that we work together to limit the damage from the present controversy. The Navy is extremely agitated, and he feels it would be useful if I could see and talk to the Navy Commander in Chief Admiral Anaya. I said if the President and he feel this is important I would be glad to do it. He called President Galtieri who agreed to try to set up the appointment for later today.⁶ Lami Dozo said that the Navy is convinced that the U.S. is passing great amounts of intelligence to the British. I explained that our intelligence exchange with the British is the normal one, chiefly directed at the Northern Hemisphere. My own impression is that currently they have far better intelligence on the South Atlantic than we do. He said that this is his impression also and that their knowledge of ship movements is absolutely astonishing; but feels it will be useful if I could talk to the Navy. He believes that the negotiations should now be continued in two phases: the Secretary General of the U.N. should call for a meeting of Foreign Ministers of Argentina and Britain

⁶ No memorandum of conversation of Walters's meeting with Anaya has been found. In his memoirs, Haig wrote of the Walters-Anaya exchange: "'No matter what happens,' Anaya said, 'I will never, repeat never, turn to the Soviet Union. It would betray everything for which I stand.' Anaya spoke of the dead sailors and of his long friendship with Galtieri; they had been comrades since the age of twelve." (Haig, *Caveat*, p. 295)

with a Latin American country, a West European country, and perhaps one or two others. I said the advantage of having the U.S. in such a group was that we had considerable influence over the British, even though they did not advise us in advance of their military operations. He agreed and then said as second step President Galtieri and Mrs. Thatcher should get together in some third country under UN auspices to work out final details of an agreement. He did not seem to have a sense of urgency like Galtieri's. He said that the evacuation of U.S. dependents had produced an unfavorable impression among the Argentine military, who felt that service families should be the last to leave, not the first. He has been asked to remove or limit the flying of the U.S. Air Attache's aircraft and has refused to do so, saying that Argentina was a Western country and should not make the task of restoring relations with the U.S. after the present situation any more difficult.

2. He was very composed and moderate throughout and gave me the impression that the long-term relationship between the U.S. and Argentina is more important to him than the Malvinas. He addressed me as Dick and asked me to call him Arturo. (I have known him for several years) The meeting lasted about one hour and was conducted in Spanish. He said that either he or Galtieri would get back to me about the appointment with Admiral Anaya later in the day. He is quite an impressive figure, showing a considerable degree of thoughtfulness and moderation, a most unusual quality in the present circumstances here.