

256. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, May 13, 1982, 11:30 a.m.

PARTICIPANTS

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

SUBJECT

Current Status of the Negotiations at the UN

Comment:

This memorandum of a telephone conversation with Takacs also weaves in a corroboratory call I got shortly thereafter from Ricardo Zinn (Argentine businessman apparently sent here as an emissary by the Junta). *This report of these two talks may help shed some light on the confusion here produced by the General Iglesias statement to the Washington Post which cast doubt on whether Argentina is stalling or has been sincere in delinking sovereignty from negotiations.*²

Takacs made (and Zinn underscored) the following points to me on the status of the negotiations:

—The GOA has only one consolidated position. As he had told me on the 11th and as I reported,³ sovereignty and negotiations are delinked. The Iglesias statement was drafted before Costa Mendez's weekend statement.⁴

—He and Raul Quijano have recommended that Galtieri himself go public with this stance in Buenos Aires. (He also has asked the Brazilian Foreign Minister to give assurances to Secretary Haig of Argentine sincerity) and he himself has so stated this yesterday on NBC.

¹ Source: Reagan Library, Roger Fontaine Files, OAS [Organization of American States] [May 1982]. Confidential; Limdis. Fontaine wrote at the top of the memorandum that he saw it on May 17.

² Presumably a reference to a written statement released by Iglesias to the *Washington Post* after an interview with the newspaper on May 11, which stated: "We have said that we pursue only one objective: restore the Malvinas [Falklands] to our national patrimony, place those territories under our sovereignty. We are demanding, therefore, that whatever agreement is arrived at for a peaceful solution should constitute a sure and guaranteed route so that sovereignty will be total and full within a reasonable time." (Jackson Diehl, "Control Is the Only Goal, General Says," *Washington Post*, May 12, p. A1)

³ See Document 246.

⁴ See footnote 3, Document 246.

—The British now accept Argentine sincerity on the delinking and understand that for the GOA sovereignty is a *goal* but not a *pre-condition* for negotiations.⁵ Talks in New York have gone beyond that point.

—In New York, elements of a cease-fire are agreed upon including the timing and conditions of phased withdrawals by both sides under UN supervision during a ten-day period with certain percentages of forces on day one, day three, day five, etc. (Zinn, by the way, confirmed to me that the British negotiators accept these withdrawal terms which would have elements of the fleet pulling back to Ascension Island.)

—The only remaining hang up now is disagreement over the composition of the Advisory/Administrative Council which would serve under UN Commissioners. Argentina wants Argentine/British/Islander representation. The UK wants a Council composed solely of Islanders, which the GOA finds totally unacceptable. To the GOA this British insistence is a clear signal of British intentions to push for self-determination. (Takacs commented that if the UK pushed Independence through this device, it would negate 17 years of negotiations. He added that Galtieri's string has run out so far as concessions are concerned. One more concession and he's out, leaving a Junta absolutely determined on war.)

Takacs then made a plea for U.S. help with the British. He said that the UK may be more inflexible than necessary on this final detail, knowing it has "the indiscriminate support of the U.S." If the U.S. were to soften its support—publicly or privately, the British would compromise on the Advisory Council issue and the rest of the steps could begin—"benefiting the U.S. in Latin America for years to come." I promised to pass on his views.

Takacs then turned to his ideas on repairing damage. With a cease-fire and negotiations almost in place he urged we consider ways to improve our position in the region. He suggested we immediately announce lifting our economic measures.⁶ (The same point Zinn made

⁵ In telegram 10604 from London, May 13, the Embassy reported that a "well-informed" British FCO source said that "HMG could live with the latest Argentine formula on sovereignty, provided the other major outstanding issues could be resolved satisfactorily. He identified these other issues as: (1) Provision for interim administration; and (2) modalities of withdrawal." In telegram Tosec 70015/130169 to Haig in Ankara, May 13, the Department transmitted the text of telegram 10604. (Department of State, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Miscellaneous Files, March 1981–February 1983, Lot 83D210, Falklands [Folder 1])

⁶ Middendorf drew an asterisk after this word, which corresponds to the following handwritten notation at the bottom of the page: "when the ceasefire is in place."

in his talk with me on the 11th). Even before that, however, we should announce that we will not support any escalation of the war by the British—such an announcement would enhance the Secretary's image and have a very positive effect in the region. He commented on the very bad impressions being created by speculation that we were assisting the British military. He mentioned a recent *Time* story and comments by a DOD spokesman he had seen. (I made no substantive comment, merely saying, again, that I would pass on his views).

Takacs added that he had lunched the other day with Rowland Evans and had told him of his fervent hope that "not all that we have sown is lost; not all that we have built is broken." He said that if the U.S. does not participate now in the solution by indicating we will not support escalation, years will be lost in our Hemispheric relationships.

Comment:

Takacs obviously is very worried about what may come from escalated hostilities. For what it is worth, however, most of what he had to say to me suggests that a cease-fire perhaps as early as this weekend appears feasible—although, of course, I am not in a position to corroborate his account of the status of the negotiations. If he is right, however, we then can get on with repairing the damage this tragic dispute has caused for the inter-American system.