

267. Telegram From the Department of State to Secretary of State
Haig in Athens¹

Washington, May 15, 1982, 2147Z

Tosec 70117/133560. For the Secretary from Enders. Subject: Next Steps on Falkland Islands.

1. Secret/Sensitive–Entire text.

2. Should Perez de Cuellar fail, you may wish to consider a contact group effort to impose a solution as the next step: Under this concept, the contact group would call on Argentina and Britain to accept a formula consisting say of:

(A) Perez de Cuellar negotiation paragraph;

(B) Withdrawal paragraph from your April 27 proposal;²

(C) Negotiations explicitly to apply to three groups of Islands, but withdrawal and interim administrator to only one;³

(D) Interim administration paragraph clearly stating that administration will be carried out in consultation with⁴ local inhabitants but not restoring the councils;⁵

¹ Source: Department of State, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Miscellaneous Files, March 1981–February 1983, Lot 83D210, Falklands [Folder 1]. Secret; Immediate; Nodis. Haig initialed at the top of the telegram and wrote: “Dave [Gompert] see me.” The text of the telegram was marked extensively with a highlighter pen. Haig was in Athens May 15–16.

² Haig drew a check mark in the right-hand margin next to this point. Reference is to the proposals Haig took to Buenos Aires. See Documents 179 and 180.

³ Haig wrote “No!” in the right-hand margin next to this point.

⁴ Haig inserted the handwritten phrase “elected reps of” after this word.

⁵ Haig placed brackets around the phrase “but not restoring the councils.”

(E) Contact group would be responsible for the interim administration, and could extend it beyond the deadline for negotiations if it thought it necessary;

(F) Facilitation of contact [group] paragraph along the lines of your April 27 proposal (i.e. establishment of the general principle, contact group to make recommendations to the two parties);⁶

(G) Built in agreement by contact group members to verify and guarantee the agreement, per your May 5 proposal through Belaunde.⁷

3. The contact group would be called together by the US and Brazil (maybe by Reagan and Figueiredo) and include France and Germany, and Mexico and Peru. Peru is inflamed; but Belaunde is rational and can be helpful. So is his Prime Minister, Ulloa, who would probably be the main player. Mexico can be useful because it is emphatic in non-use of force, supports the Argentine claim, and will want (at this late stage in the Lopez-Portillo sexenio) to earn international recognition. Venezuela would prove so intractable that it would probably render the contact group ineffective. Note that the members would not be chosen according to the wishes of the disputants.⁸

4. On the assumption that Perez de Cuellar throws in the towel Tuesday May 18, the contact group could be convened immediately—or only after some significant military action. A Security Council meeting would convene, in which Britain and the US would veto a resolution calling for immediate cessation of hostilities. The disadvantage of immediate convocation is that the group may lose its credibility if it can't stop the action forthwith. The advantage is that it may be harder to convene later (if Britain hits the mainland),⁹ and immediate convocation may help curtail pressures for a cease fire.

5. The leverage of the group would be essentially political, but it could take the position that it would cease all assistance, including sanctions, to the parties if the proposal were turned down.¹⁰

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⁶ Haig drew a check mark in the right-hand margin next to this point.

⁷ Haig drew a check mark in the right-hand margin next to this point. See Document 232.

⁸ In the right-hand margin next to this paragraph, Haig wrote: "Why Mexico suddenly[?] Why not Brazil[?]"

⁹ On May 15, the Department transmitted to Haig a memorandum from Enders, Scanlan, and Howe, through Eagleburger, which analyzed options for a U.S. response if fighting in the South Atlantic escalated, including British attacks on the mainland. (Telegram/Tosec 70091/132520 to Haig in Ankara, May 15; Department of State, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Miscellaneous Files, March 1981–February 1983, Lot 83D210, Falklands [Folder 1])

¹⁰ Haig wrote "No!" in the right-hand margin next to this paragraph.