

**274. Telegram From the Mission to the United Nations to the Department of State and the White House<sup>1</sup>**

New York, May 19, 1982, 1629Z

1384. For Secretary of State Haig and NSC Director Clark

1. Entire text Secret.

2. I met last night with my Argentine opposite number, Amb to the UN Eduardo Roca. He was accompanied by Ros and Bunge to review the current situation of the negotiations. Jose Sorzano was also present.

3. Ros provided a copy of the Argentine response<sup>2</sup> which I had already read from our sources.

4. I attempted without success to persuade them that the British proposal is not so bad; that Argentina could, if she chose, accept it and declare she had won by the establishment of a UN authority responsible for the government. (Both Bunge and Ricardo Zinn had been persuaded of this during the afternoon, and also of the feasibility of "selling" this position to Argentine public opinion. Zinn returned last night to Buenos Aires to attempt to persuade key members of the Junta.) Bunge reported that Ros said later that he understood I was a friend of Argentina but nonetheless I "sounded like Haig."

5. This morning I spoke with SYG Perez de Cuellar. He described the Argentine response as "terrible" for this stage of the negotiations, and the British proposal as rigid but fundamentally "not so bad," saying the Argentines must accept the fact that however justified their position may be, juridically they were wrong. They should also accept the fact that they have won by securing a UN authority.

6. He said Ros is looking forward to a Security Council meeting; that Costa Mendez (whom he characterized as "a man almost wholly without influence") will speak; that they are not too bothered by a veto; that they will get a special session of the General Assembly and perhaps win 75 votes—but what difference will it make?

7. He said he would present some proposals to the Argentines this morning and if they "can live with them" he will ask the British for 24 hours more. He will give me a copy after he has presented them. I will pass them to you and to Bunge who will carry them to Buenos

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Reagan Library, Executive Secretariat, NSC Cable File, Falkland File 05/19/1982. Secret; Sensitive; Flash; Nodis. Printed from a copy that was received in the White House Situation Room.

<sup>2</sup> See Document 275.

Aires to the Commander in Chief of the Air Force with whom he is in continuous contact (I have learned).

8. Bunge believes Galtieri, Lami Dozo, even Anaya want a peaceful settlement, and that certain officers at the level below do not. He thinks his personal safety may be in some danger when he returns because "if they can pick up six foreign journalists they can dispose of me entirely." He sees Masera as the head of this faction. He proposes to leave a sealed statement with me that I can release in case he disappears at the hands of those who regard it as treason to look for a settlement.

9. Bunge is a key figure in the "pro-U.S." foreign policy group. He believes, as Zinn believes, that some of this group are ready to deal with the Cubans. Now, he says, the Foreign Office is an obstacle. But Bunge and Zinn are in direct touch with the Commanders in Chief of the Junta, whom they believe may desire to settle.

10. Rumors continue to circulate broadly here that the British will attack the Argentine mainland. Perez de Cuellar said he told British Ambassador Parsons that "everyone" would strongly condemn the British for this. He said Parsons assured him this would not happen.

11. Bunge reported this morning that Lami Dozo and colleagues are awaiting eagerly the SYG's proposal.

12. I emphasized my view that Britain was serious: she would make war, and that time had run out. Ros said he agreed and estimated they were no more than 24 hours from a British invasion.

Comment: If the British attack the Argentinian mainland, Argentinians and Latin Americans will assume that such an attack had American support and that the U.S. had prior knowledge. Argentina will break diplomatic relations with the U.S. Three sets of consequences will probably follow:

(A) Probable overthrow of pro-U.S. government by leftist, nationalist, violently anti-U.S. government. Cuban/Soviet supplying of arms and associated advisors.

(B) Hemispheric consequences. Continent-wide orgiastic anti-U.S. demonstrations. Anti-U.S. policies and positions adopted throughout Hemisphere. Real possibility of Peru, Venezuela and others to be drawn into war sphere with hemispheric consequences.

(C) Destruction of inter-American system and Rio Treaty with obvious consequences for our Central American and hemispheric strategic position.

Therefore, British attack on Argentina mainland will have far more severe consequences than an invasion of the Falkland Islands and should be seen as an extremely high-cost operation.

P.S.: Argentines assert that U.S. refueling of British bombers will be tantamount to U.S. bombing of Argentina.

**Kirkpatrick**