

308. Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State-
Designate for European Affairs (Burt) to Secretary of
State Haig¹

Washington, May 28, 1982

Mr. Secretary:

I have worked with Tom Enders on putting together the attached proposal, but I want you to be aware of a few reservations.² One basic problem with this approach in my view is that it is a "total" plan for resolving the dispute, and thus asks the British to make a number of concessions all at once. As we discussed last night,³ I think it makes much more sense to focus on the near-term question of terminating the conflict in such a way to avoid the complete humiliation of the Argentines. Thus, even if you buy off on the total package I think in your discussions with the British, you should only focus on near-term steps.

This said, we must be aware that the attached proposal makes some major assumptions about British behavior:

—It assumes that the British will be willing to reach an agreement along the lines sketched out in the proposal "short of surrender."

—It assumes that the British would be willing almost immediately to allow U.S. and Brazilian forces to organize the evacuation of Argentine prisoners, thus denying the British the use of these prisoners in follow-on negotiations. (It goes without saying that prisoners have become a standard form of negotiating capital in modern conflicts, e.g., Viet Nam, Indo-Pakistani conflict, Egypt-Israel.)

¹ Source: Department of State, Central Foreign Policy File, P900060-0778. Secret. A May 28 covering note by Enders indicates that the memorandum and its attachment had been prepared by Burt, Gompert, Gudgeon, and Enders. Enders also added two observations: "(a) We *don't* want to participate if we do only the military part (i.e. let ICRC handle repatriation, which would be politically damaging to us). (b) We *don't* want to present all of this to Henderson now, but only the military ideas, saying that of course the other aspects would have to be covered." A stamped notation on the note indicates that Haig saw Burt's memorandum. (Department of State, Central Foreign Policy File, P900060-0777)

² Burt crossed out the typewritten word "revisions" and replaced it with "reservations." On May 27, Burt sent to Haig an information memorandum with an attached draft non-paper intended for Henderson. According to the memorandum, it and the non-paper were produced for Haig following a May 27 morning meeting and made many of the same points as the May 28 proposal. (Department of State, Executive Secretariat, S/S Special Handling Restrictions Memos 1979-1983, Lot 96D262, ES Sensitive May 25-31 1982)

³ No other record of this meeting has been found.

—It assumes that the British, in hours following the end of the fighting, would be willing to announce a total military withdrawal within two months.

—It assumes that the British, within two months, would be willing to turn over executive authority to the U.S. and Brazil and to announce this soon after a ceasefire.

—Finally, it assumes that the British would permit the creation of a contact group without British participation.

One last note, in the event that no final solution to the problem is reached, the contact group would administer the Islands indefinitely, along with the U.S. and Brazilian peace-keeping forces. Are we willing to take on such an open-ended commitment, particularly if, as seems likely, we would find ourselves constantly at odds with the Kelper-dominated councils? We know that we must ask a great deal of the British in any proposal, but overloading the circuits is one sure way to guarantee failure.

Richard Burt⁴

Assistant Secretary-designate for European Affairs

Attachment

Draft Proposal Prepared in the Department of State⁵

Washington, undated

Dates:

- T Date of agreement on package of measures
- T₁ Date of cease-fire and reciprocal announcements
- T₂ Date of Argentine evacuation from islands
- T₃ Date of completion of UK withdrawal of forces

Agreement

When the UK is confident of its control of the military situation, but short of surrender of the local Argentine commander, the US and Brazil would propose to the military commands of the UK and Argentina, and obtain agreement of both governments (on date T) on the following integral package of immediate and deferred steps:

⁴ Burt signed "Rick" above his typed signature.

⁵ No classification marking. Drafted by Gudgeon on May 28. All brackets are in the original.

Military Situation

—A cease-fire (effective T_1) [A general—not local—cessation of hostilities and lifting of declared operational zones];

—Immediate introduction of small contingents of US and Brazilian peace-keeping forces

(i) to verify the cease-fire;

(ii) to ensure the separation of forces (i.e., concentration of Argentine forces in given areas from which they can be evacuated);

(iii) to organize the exchange of prisoners;

(iv) to provide medical services; and

(v) to organize the departure of Argentine combatants. [Latter three steps might involve coordination with the ICRC].

—On date T_1 , the UK would announce its intention to phase the total withdrawal of its forces, commencing after the evacuation of Argentine forces (date T_2) and to be completed within a short time, e.g., two months, by date T_3 ; on date T_3 , the UK would replace the interim military administration it will have established with a restoration of local self-government under the Councils [the office of Governor would remain vacant].

Negotiations

—The UK and Argentina would both announce on date T_1 their preparedness to resume negotiations to find a peaceful, definitive solution;

—Each would announce their commitment to respect the cease-fire, not to reintroduce forces onto the islands after their respective evacuation/withdrawal, and to take no steps that might prejudice or prejudice the final outcome of the process;

—Each side might announce that the economic measures they (and third countries) have taken would be terminated on a specified date (e.g., date T_2).

Contact Group

—The UK, Argentina, the US, and Brazil would announce on date T_1 their agreement to create a Contact Group composed of Brazil and the US to:

(i) assist the two parties to establish the modalities for their negotiations;

(ii) as of date T_3 , to assume the function of promptly ratifying all actions by the local administration except those inconsistent with the agreement; and

(iii) provide required peace-keeping forces.

The Contact Group would assume its functions pending a definitive settlement.

—The Contact Group would determine its own procedures, making decisions on the basis of unanimity.