

331. Telegram From the Department of State to Secretary of State Haig in Bonn¹

Washington, June 10, 1982, 0203Z

Tosec 80380/159041. Eyes Only for Richard Burt from Blackwill.
Subject: Falklands Strategies.

1. Entire text Secret.

2. The following paper is for your reflection on your way back,² and before a meeting with the Secretary (whenever it takes place). It does not take into account any conversations you may have had on the other side of the water.

3. It seems likely that Prime Minister Thatcher will refuse meaningful negotiations with the Argentines after she has cleared them off the Falklands, that her goal will be to improve the Islands' economy and increase immigration. She may reaffirm Kelper right to self-determination, and keep open the possibility of independence.

4. If the Prime Minister no longer seeks a negotiated settlement, we must decide whether to continue to support negotiations, as called for in UNSC Resolution 502, or to embrace the principle of self-determination for the Falklands. Nearly as important as the policy we adopt will be the degree we choose to be diplomatically involved in this next stage of the crisis.

5. From these perspectives we see four possible US diplomatic strategies in the near-term. (In all cases we would return materiel aid to the UK to normal, pre-crisis levels.)

6. Vigorously support self-determination: (All our money on the special relationship).

—At the UN we would aggressively support the UK position, vetoing as necessary resolutions calling for negotiations.

—We would contribute to a UK-sponsored peace-keeping force in the Falklands.

7. Support self-determination, but with a low diplomatic profile: (Trying to have it both ways).

—We would minimize public comment.

¹ Source: Department of State, Central Foreign Policy File, D820302-0048. Secret; Immediate; Exdis; Eyes Only. Drafted and approved by Blackwill; cleared by Bremer and in S/S-O. Haig was then in Bonn, accompanying Reagan for talks with West German officials and to attend the North Atlantic Council Summit.

² Following stops in Bonn (June 9-11) and West Berlin (June 11), the U.S. delegation traveling with Reagan returned to Washington on June 11.

—At the UN we would abstain on resolutions calling for UK/Argentine negotiations.

—No US contribution to the peace-keeping force.

8. Vigorous support for negotiations: (Assumes we can persuade the Prime Minister to be flexible).

—We would actively and publicly argue that Western—and US—interests require the UK to talk to the Argentines about the future status of the Falklands, and that applying the principle of self-determination to 1800 people is impractical.

—At the UN and the OAS we would support resolutions calling for negotiations.

—We would maintain intense dialogue on the problem with Argentines, British, UN, Brazilians, other Latins, etc.

—We would support Perez de Cuellar's negotiating initiatives and keep actively open the possibility of another US negotiating effort.

—We would repeat our willingness to contribute to a peacekeeping force.

9. Advocate negotiations, but keep a low diplomatic profile: (Assumes no movement on Thatcher's part).

—So far as events allow, we would reduce our diplomatic involvement and minimize our public comments on Falklands developments. But when asked we would reaffirm our support for 502.

—At the UN, we would vote for resolutions consistent with 502 and abstain on ambiguous texts like 506.³

—We would gradually allow our bilateral conversations on the problem to peter out.

Conclusions

10. Given geographic and demographic realities, self-determination with eventual independence for the Falklands is not a viable alternative. We should make clear to the Prime Minister we could not support her if she chooses it.

11. An eventual resolution of the South Atlantic crisis will require negotiations, and we therefore believe that our policy should continue to be based on UNSC 502. Our emphasis on UNSC 502 underscores an important principle—the unacceptability of force. This approach also probably enjoys more public and congressional support in the US than any other. It commands the respect of the other European allies. Its costs in terms of our bilateral relations with the UK—while real—would perhaps be manageable. The US position would essentially be

³ An erroneous reference to UN Security Council Resolution 505. See Document 301.

the same as the rest of the UK's NATO allies and EC partners, as well as that of the opposition parties in the House of Commons. Indeed, sections of her own Conservative Party are sympathetic to this stance. Under these circumstances, while the Prime Minister's personal relations with the President might cool, she could not risk a break with us.

12. The degree of our diplomatic involvement will inevitably be affected by the levels of violence following British reoccupation of the Falklands. A high-profile US diplomatic stance is heavy with risk of failure. At least in the short-term, it is unlikely that we can convince the Prime Minister to accept a negotiated settlement. Hence we should seek to keep our diplomatic profile low whatever substantive position we choose. If the Argentines actively pursue the war, we face the risk of escalation of the conflict, perhaps to the Argentine mainland, and still wider damage to our position in the Hemisphere. Under these circumstances active US diplomatic effort to persuade the British to negotiate—despite the costs to our bilateral relationship—may be required.

Stoessel