

357. Telegram From the Department of State to All Diplomatic Posts and the Embassy in Argentina¹

Washington, June 22, 1982, 0001Z

172069. ZFF Canberra only. Subject: South Atlantic Crisis. Situation Report as of 1700 Edt, June 21, 1982, No. 93. Canberra also for DepSec Stoessel/Todep 30116.

1. C--(Entire text).

2. Thatcher visit to Washington. Prime Minister Thatcher is scheduled to meet with President Reagan in Washington on June 23, to discuss the Falkland Islands and other issues. Mrs. Thatcher will fly to Washington from New York, where she will address the United Nations Disarmament Conference.

3. The aftermath of war. Argentine POW's began arriving at Puerto Madryn in southern Argentina over the weekend. The Canberra carried 4,200 men and some 2,700 others are on the ferry Norland and on Argentine ships. There is still no formal cessation of hostilities. The UK Defense Ministry announced June 20 that 10 Argentine military personnel, who had manned a weather station on Thule in the South Sandwich Islands since 1976, had surrendered to British forces.² According to the Ministry, there was no fighting. (Along with the Falklands and South Georgia Islands, the Argentines claim sovereignty over the South Sandwiches.)

¹ Source: Department of State, Central Foreign Policy File, D820324-0505. Confidential; Immediate. Sent for information Immediate to European POLADs Collective, the Department of Defense, USSOUTHCOM, USCINCEUR, and USCINCLANT. Drafted by M. Schmidt (FWG); cleared in S/S-O; approved by Service.

² On the origins of the Argentine presence on Thule, see footnote 5, Document 1.

4. Argentina internal. Interior Minister Saint Jean took over as acting President June 18, but the Junta (Nicolaides replacing Galtieri) is having a tough time agreeing on a more permanent replacement. Both the navy and air force appear to be leaning toward a civilian; reportedly the army continues to hold out for one of its own, even if a retired officer. While basic issues of future policy may be at stake, the prolonged indecision probably owes as much to institutional and personal rivalries among the services and their top brass.

5. EC lifts sanctions. The EC Ministers today announced that economic sanctions against Argentina would be lifted as of June 22, but that individual member nations' arms embargoes remain in force for the time being. The UK retains all of its sanctions against Argentina. No decision has been made on the lifting of US sanctions.

6. Barring dramatic new developments, this will be the last South Atlantic crisis sitrep.

7. Buenos Aires minimize considered.

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