

CONFIDENTIALRECORD OF A MEETING HELD BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE U.N.  
SECRETARY GENERAL IN NEW YORK ON WEDNESDAY 23 JUNE 1982 AT 0945Present:

|                          |                        |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| Prime Minister           | Senor Perez de Cuellar |
| Sir Anthony Parsons      | Mr. Brian Urquhart     |
| Mr. David<br>Summerhayes | Senor Alvaro de Soto   |
| Mr. Clive Whitmore       | Mr. Michael Stopford   |
| Mr. Bernard Ingham       |                        |

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Southern Africa

The Prime Minister said that Senor Perez de Cuellar was well remembered in Britain for the enormous help he had given at the time of Rhodesia's transition to independence. The British Government had made it clear at the outset of that process that it would accept the result of the election whatever it was. There had been others, however, who would let it be known that they would accept only an outcome which suited them. Against this background, it had been very useful to have Senor Perez de Cuellar there as an independent observer. After Britain's success in bringing Rhodesia to independence, there had been those who thought that she should try to perform the same role with regard to Namibia.

Senor Perez de Cuellar said that he was glad that he had been able to play a useful role at the time of Rhodesian independence. As regards Namibia, there was now a feeling of hope and we must do all we could to maintain that mood. In reply to a question by the Prime Minister, he explained that the double vote scheme had been discarded as too complicated a system for Africans new to voting.

Lebanon

Mr. Urquhart said that the latest news from Lebanon was not good. Fighting around Beirut and on the road to Damascus had begun again, though it was not clear who had started it. The

/ battle

battle was now mainly between Israel and Syria, with the PLO joining in from time to time. Beirut airport was closed. Yesterday, Mr. Philip Habib's efforts to establish a ceasefire had appeared to come to nothing, and the UN did not know what turn his negotiations would now take. Israel was being very difficult about assistance for casualties. They were very critical of the Red Cross and wanted to conduct all relief operations themselves. Senor Perez de Cuellar added that the Israelis wanted to distribute all relief themselves no matter where it came from.

Mr. Urquhart went on to say that the Arab Deterrent Force (ADF) was due to come up for renewal next month. He understood that Lebanon had said some time ago that they did not want the ADF extended. The Syrians, on the other hand, had made it plain that they intended to stay in Lebanon.

The question of who should contribute to a force to guarantee any ceasefire in Lebanon was causing the American Government difficulties. They did not want to take on this task themselves, and their reluctance was understandable. It would be a far trickier and more complex undertaking than the MFO in Sinai. Israel, on the other hand, would not accept a UN force. Rather, they wanted a force which was underpinned by one of the great powers. He wondered whether a possible answer was a UN force underpinned by guarantees from the great powers. Senor Perez de Cuellar added that most countries were reluctant to contribute to such a force because they felt that to do so would identify them with the Israeli invaders.

Mr. Urquhart said that relations between and within the different confessional factions in Lebanon were thoroughly tangled. Mr. Jumblatt had now joined the new Lebanese Government. He was an important channel to the PLO. The position of the PLO was a cause of very serious concern. So long as it remained in strength and heavily armed in Western Beirut, the possibility remained that Israel would attack that part of the city. The resulting casualties and damage would be appalling.

/ Senor Perez de Cuellar

Senor Perez de Cuellar said that it was essential to keep the PLO in being. Yasser Arafat had certainly been a terrorist, as had a number of now prominent Israeli politicians, but he was the only interlocutor available. He was in fact a reasonable man. The Americans had been wrong in not dealing with him, even indirectly. His position in relation to other Palestinian leaders was now very difficult.

Sir Anthony Parsons said that if the PLO was broken, we would go back ten years to the era of hijacking and other acts of international terrorism.

Falkland Islands

Senor Perez de Cuellar said that the new President of the Argentine did not have the full support of the Navy and Air Force. The political situation in Buenos Aires was obscure. He still had the mandate which had been given to him by the Security Council, though he felt that there was nothing he could do at present. Nonetheless, at some stage, in consultation with the British Government, he would have to do something. There was always the possibility that a member of the Security Council would suddenly ask what he had been doing in fulfilment of the mandate.

The Prime Minister said that she agreed that it was difficult to see what he could do at present. As soon as British forces had repossessed the Islands, the British Government had sent a message to the Junta through the Swiss saying that they were prepared to start the process of repatriating the many Argentine prisoners, provided that there was a total cessation of hostilities between the two countries. We had also proposed that in those circumstances the economic measures and exclusion zones instituted by both parties should be lifted. In short we were seeking to get back to normal as soon as possible. But the Argentines' response, which had been contained in their letter to the Secretary General, had been negative. It was still not clear whether the Argentine accepted that there had been a complete cessation of hostilities. Under the Geneva Convention, we did not have to repatriate prisoners until all active hostilities had ceased. Nonetheless,

/ so many

so many of the Argentines taken prisoner in the Falkland Islands had been in bad shape, that we had been anxious to send them back to the Argentine as quickly as possible. We had found that disease was widespread among them, and many were badly fed. The Argentines had agreed to allow British ships into Puerto Madryn which had speeded up the process of repatriation and we had now sent back some 10,000 out of a total of about 11,600. Until such time as the Argentines accepted a complete cessation of hostilities, we proposed to keep some 600 prisoners made up mainly of senior officers, pilots and technicians. We could keep this number in the Falklands in reasonable conditions. Even so, if the undertaking we wanted from the Argentines on the cessation of hostilities was not forthcoming, the prisoners would before long be taken by ship to Ascension Island and thence to the United Kingdom. There were also 35 Argentines who had volunteered to help clear the mine fields which had been laid during the occupation of the Islands. The Argentines had not recorded where they had laid the mines. This was contrary to international law. The lack of information about the whereabouts of the mines posed very real dangers. Moreover, the mines were made of plastic and were therefore very difficult to locate. They would be a danger for a long time to come, and already four British soldiers had been injured in trying to clear them.

The Falkland Islanders had been through a traumatic period of invasion and occupation. Mr. Rex Hunt would be returning shortly to become the Civil Commissioner. The Commander of the Land Forces would be the Military Commissioner. Mr. Hunt's presence would help restore confidence among the Islanders. For many months to come the main preoccupation would be with practical reconstruction. The problems would be considerable, and we should not be able to rush them. Our objective would be to make the Islanders feel that life was returning to normal. The practicalities would absorb them for quite a period. This was just as well, for time healed wounds more quickly than anything else.

/ Looking further

Looking further ahead, Britain would try to accelerate the process of giving the Falkland Islanders self-government. Much had already been done in this direction and now we should try to give them complete self-government.

Britain would continue to seek Argentine acceptance of a complete cessation of hostilities. But if they did not respond and if there was, nonetheless, a reasonable period in which they took no hostile military action against the Falkland Islands and British forces, Britain would assume that there was in practice a complete cessation of hostilities.

The Prime Minister hoped that time would heal Argentine wounds too. It had been her Government which had restored diplomatic relations between Britain and Argentina, and until the invasion of the Falkland Islands we had believed that we were getting on well with Argentina. The invasion had thrust us into a new situation.

Senor Perez de Cuellar said that friendship between Britain and Argentina must be restored in due course. They were two countries which had been linked happily for many years. Would Britain resume negotiations about the Falkland Islands with Argentina?

The Prime Minister said that she agreed that eventually Anglo-Argentine friendship would have to be restored. The immediate need was to agree upon a cessation of hostilities. We could then build on that. With the passage of time she hoped to be able to make overtures to Argentina leading to a restoration of diplomatic relations. But one immediate problem was that during the present crisis it had been very difficult to know whom we were dealing with in Buenos Aires, and it remained to be seen whether the change in the leadership there would improve matters in that respect.

Senor Perez de Cuellar said that he was worried that there would be a continuing focus of tension in the South Atlantic. This would be very damaging for the whole of Latin America. It would help lessen tension if a dialogue was started. But he saw that there must be a complete cessation of hostilities first.

The Prime Minister said that Britain wanted to be as friendly as possible with Argentina and with Latin America as a whole. It was worth emphasising that Latin America was not a monolithic entity. Some Latin American countries - for example, Brazil - had been very helpful during the Falklands crisis. She did not feel that the UK had lost the friendship of those countries. Nonetheless, she saw problems looming in the future: the dispute between Venezuela and Guyana was one example.

Senor Perez de Cuellar said that he was in touch with Venezuela. He wanted to avoid a repetition of the Falklands episode. The Venezuelan Government would be sending someone to discuss the problem with him shortly. Their Foreign Minister had promised him that Venezuela would not use force but would pursue all peaceful means of solving the dispute. He believed that there was reason for hope.

The Prime Minister repeated that Britain would do everything possible to improve relations with Argentina. We recognised that they would be sensitive and bruised and would need to be handled slowly and gently for some time.

Senor Perez de Cuellar said that he was at Britain's disposal to act as a channel of communication in this process. This was not just a matter of his mandate from the Security Council. He believed that Argentina trusted him insofar as they trusted anyone. Something had to be done, though he accepted that this would be later and not now. There was no need for a special initiative: his mandate was there and could be used. He hoped the Prime Minister would think it over. He emphasised that he was not putting pressure on her.

Looking back, it was remarkable how close to agreement we had got. But as Mr. Haig had said to him recently, we now knew why agreement had eluded us: the Argentine had had no leadership. It was very sad. Argentina had so many advantages such as racial unity and extensive natural resources. Nor

/ was she

was she "exactly a young African country" but that was how she behaved politically.

In conclusion, the Prime Minister and Senor Perez de Cuellar agreed that they would tell the press that they had discussed the Falkland Islands in general terms and had assessed the situation together.

The meeting ended at 1027 hours.

*hah.*

23 June 1982

-- Despite the present difficulties, restoration of normal relations between the United Kingdom and Argentina should be attainable in time because of compelling common interests.

-- Given existing sensibilities, the United Nations could facilitate communication and understanding between the two sides.

-- The Secretary-General's good offices are, of course, available as mandated by the Security Council, to which he will need to report in due course.

-- The Secretary-General would be prepared to explore with both sides possible ways of resolving immediate problems and achieving a resolution of underlying differences.

-- The initiation of a flexible procedure for the diplomatic solution of these differences as called for by Security Council Resolution 502 could well be the key to a comprehensive cessation of hostilities.

-- The Secretary-General would welcome any ideas the United Kingdom might suggest in this context.



BK

SUBJECT



file

cc Master

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

23 June 1982

Dear Brian,

PRIME MINISTER'S CALL ON THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS

I attach at Annex A the record of the meeting which the Prime Minister had earlier today with the UN Secretary General in New York.

An hour or so after the meeting de Soto gave Goulding the piece of paper at Annex B. He told Goulding that it represented the points which the Secretary General had "been trying to make" in his conversation with the Prime Minister. It did not require any response from us: there was no question of the Secretary General "putting pressure" on the United Kingdom nor of setting new deadlines for a response. It was simply that Perez de Cuellar wanted the Prime Minister to have a written note of the points he had been attempting to put to her. In reply to Goulding's question, de Soto said that the Secretary General had not decided when he would need to report again to the Security Council: that depended on developments.

I am sending a copy of this letter and its attachments to David Wright (Cabinet Office).

Yours sincerely,

Alvie Whittam.

Brian Fall, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

BK

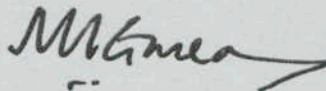
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Mr Whitmore

cc Sir A Parsons

FALKLANDS

After the Prime Minister's statement in the General Assembly this morning, Mr de Soto gave me the attached piece of paper, asking that I pass it to you. He said that it represented the points the Secretary-General had 'been trying to make' in his conversation this morning with the Prime Minister. It did not ask for any response from us; there was no question of the Secretary-General 'putting pressure' on the U.K. nor of setting new deadlines for a response. It was simply that Mr Perez de Cuellar wanted the Prime Minister to have a written note of the points he had been trying to make. In reply to my question, Mr de Soto said that the Secretary-General had not decided when he would need to report again to the Security Council; that depended on developments



M I Goulding

23 June 1982

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