

SECRET

Prime Minister. 5
Agree draft 7.



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

25/6/82
Duty despatch
25/6/82

25 June, 1982

Dear John,

Falklands: Nepal

The Government of Nepal in its initial public statement on the Falklands condemned Argentine aggression and expressed the hope that the dispute would be settled peacefully and in accordance with the wishes of the inhabitants. They have not wavered in this public support in spite of (a) the somewhat different positions taken up by their powerful neighbours, India and China, between whom they are normally careful to balance their interests, and (b) criticism by the Argentines who sought to brand the Gurkhas as mercenaries. The Argentines also made a démarche to them in New York requesting them to 'pull out' the Gurkhas; the Nepalese were annoyed.

Internally, opposition to the participation of the Gurkhas has been confined to a few pro-Soviet politicians and their newspapers (which have been given undue weight in the British press). There has been no significant popular opposition. Privately, the Nepalese, while expressing robust support, have been anxious for maximum information about the deployment of the Gurka troops, for defensive use in their own parliament (which we provided); they were also grateful for the material we gave them to enable them to rebut the 'mercenaries' charge. There have however been some signs of nervousness on their part: they have for example been closely monitoring the world press for all references to the Gurkhas and taking a fresh look at the 1947 Tripartite Agreements (Nepal, the UK and India) which govern our recruitment of Gurkhas. *

* Our Ambassador has reported that the Nepalese Prime Minister has exposed himself to some criticism in the country.

To sum up, the Nepalese have been resolutely supportive both in public and private in spite of pressures on them. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary therefore thinks it would be appropriate for the Prime Minister to send a warm message of appreciation to the Nepalese Prime Minister. This might have the additional advantage of pre-empting any tendency in the future for Nepalese support to wobble if for example there were strong criticism of the continued deployment of Gurkhas in the Falklands garrison. A draft is attached, to which MOD have contributed.

~ Passage deleted and retained
under Section 3(4)
SECRET
C. Dayland, 26/4/2012

/I

SECRET



I am sending a copy of this letter to David Omand in the
Ministry of Defence

Yours ever

J E Holmes

(J E Holmes)
Private Secretary

A J Coles
Private Secretary
10 Downing Street

SECRET

MESSAGE FROM THE PRIME MINISTER TO PRIME MINISTER OF NEPAL

The restoration of British administration in the Falkland Islands, and the distinguished role played by our Gurkha troops in bringing this about, prompt me to send you this message.

From the beginning of the Falklands conflict I have been deeply conscious of the staunch support we have received from your Government, which revives for us memories of those other great struggles in the cause of freedom during this century in which Gurkha troops have fought with such legendary gallantry alongside their British comrades in arms. My Government, and the British people as a whole, are enormously grateful for that support.

We will not forget the exemplary courage and determination displayed by the First Battalion the Duke of Edinburgh's Own Gurkha Rifles and the crucial part they played. Shortly after landing they assumed responsibility for both the defence of the Darwin/Goose Green area and the surveillance of the Southern half of East Falkland Islands. Subsequently they took part in the recapture of Port Stanley. I am delighted that they suffered only light casualties. This, no doubt, was a reflection of the Gurkhas' reputation as brave, fearless and accomplished soldiers.

I send you, Prime Minister, my renewed thanks and warmest good wishes.

