

366. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Clark) to Secretary of State Haig<sup>1</sup>

Washington, June 28, 1982

SUBJECT

A Message from Argentina's General Nicolaides

General Nicolaides has transmitted a message via informal channels to my office.<sup>2</sup> The message, I believe, is genuine.

General Nicolaides made three points:

—First, he wanted better U.S.-Argentina relations, but the current situation is difficult. Opinion among officers and civilians is still embittered.

—Second, *the* critical short term problem for the military, especially the army, is the return of the remaining Argentine POWs held by the British on the Falklands.

—Third, if the U.S. could persuade the British to release them without a formal written armistice then “the door would be open for good relations.”

We may have an opportunity here. The British are beginning to be more flexible on this question. A nudge from us might do it. But we need to act quickly if we are going to get any credit with the Argentines. I know the President would appreciate your thoughts and recommendations on this.

FOR THE PRESIDENT:

William P. Clark<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Source: Department of State, Central Foreign Policy File, P890076-1206. Secret; Sensitive. There is no indication that Haig saw the memorandum; a notation in an unknown hand in the bottom right-hand corner of the memorandum reads: “Received in S/S-I 4:45 on 6/28 by VH Dove.”

<sup>2</sup> According to a June 25 memorandum from Fontaine to Clark, relaying the substance of Nicolaides's message, it was transmitted to Fontaine by telephone from Jorge Juárez Dover in Buenos Aires following a conversation that Juárez Dover had with Nicolaides. In the memorandum, Fontaine stated: “I think this is important and gives us an opportunity. The British seem to be increasingly flexible on this question, but if we move fast we can get some credit with the new government for having brought it about—and we should get that credit. Admiral Poindexter suggested (and I strongly concur) that a message from you to the Secretary of State sharing the contents of this message would be the next step.” (Reagan Library, Roger W. Fontaine Files, Argentina (June 1982–July 1982)) Fontaine also relayed the substance of Nicolaides's message in a June 25 note to McFarlane. (Ibid.)

<sup>3</sup> Clark signed “Bill” above his typed signature.