

377. Telegram From the Embassy in Argentina to the Department of State¹

Buenos Aires, July 14, 1982, 1230Z

4140. ARA only for Assistant Secretary Enders. Subject: Malvinas/Falklands: The U.S. Peace Effort.

1. (C-Entire text.)

2. In the various suggestions I have seen from our missions around the hemisphere on repairing the damage, little attention has been given to one problem: the distorted view in Latin America of the Haig mission and our efforts to promote a peaceful settlement while there was still

¹ Source: Department of State, Central Foreign Policy File, D820365-0542. Confidential.

time. Costa Mendez and his crew assiduously promoted the notion that the negotiations were fatally flawed from the outset by our pro-British bias and that the proposals we made were manifestly unfair. There are even some here who profess to believe that the entire exercise was a fake on our part, designed to throw the Argentines off their guard and allow the British to bring their forces into place.

3. The best response from our side is the text of the April 27 proposal itself.² Particularly in the aftermath of the Argentine debacle in the South Atlantic it appears fair, balanced and even generous from the Latin American perspective. I do not favor a formal white paper or high-profile press presentation at this point, but it does seem to me that we should try to promote a better understanding in Latin America of our efforts. Perhaps we could release to the press up there the April 27 proposal, along with a brief explanatory note on the course of the negotiations and the text of Costa Mendez's response (published here) which so clearly demanded a pre-determined outcome.³ The material could then be used selectively by our missions in the region.

4. There are a few signs of second thoughts here. Alvaro Alsogaray, prominent economist and political figure, has questioned the GOA conduct of the negotiations. Columnist Igelsias Rouco, a fervent supporter of the war until it was lost, in his July 13 piece concedes that Argentina missed the boat in mid-April. The polemic will go on for a long time in this country, and, given the emotions involved, may not be subject to much reasoned outside influence until a later stage. But elsewhere in Latin America perhaps we can correct some of the distortions more quickly.

Shlaudeman

² See footnote 4, Document 181.

³ See Document 189.