

386. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in the United Kingdom¹

Washington, August 18, 1982, 2239Z

232383. Subject: Enders-Onslow Letter.

1. C—Entire text.

2. Septel provides “revised text” (as of August 12) of letter from UK Minister of State Onslow to Assistant Secretary Enders, dated August 9.² Following is reply which Embassy requested deliver to Onslow. Quote.

Dear Cranley:

It was a pleasure to have had such a useful first exchange with you on subjects which are of great interest to us. I look forward to examining these and other matters in greater depth in the coming months.

In response to your letter of August 9, it might be useful for me to re-state or elaborate upon several points we addressed during the August 6 meetings.³ I believe we understand one another’s views on handling the Falklands UN resolution. We recognize you are not prepared now to enter into negotiations with Argentina. You should not be pressed to do so. For our part, we would not support a resolution which prejudged the question of sovereignty, nor one which attempted to impose an unrealistic timetable for future negotiations. Our public position remains unchanged and is, as stated in my August 5 testimony to the House Foreign Affairs committee,⁴ that “we hope the two parties

¹ Source: Department of State, Central Foreign Policy File, D820430-0045. Confidential; Immediate. Sent for information Immediate to Buenos Aires. Drafted by N.S. Smith (ARA/SC); cleared by Haass, Smith (EUR/NE), and Bosworth; approved by Enders.

² The Department transmitted the revised text of Onslow’s August 9 letter to Enders in telegram 232374 to London, August 18. In the letter, Onslow discussed his August 6 talks with Enders and expressed his appreciation of Enders’s offer “to help over the restoration of our commercial and financial relations with Argentina, which I am sure must be in all our interests in the longer term.” “One point we discussed,” he continued, “was the question of arms sales to Argentina. I know that this is a difficult issue for you, and that you have particular problems with those arms (such as the Skyhawk engines) which are not formally covered by the 1978 arms embargo. But we face difficult problems too. We must expect Argentina to rearm. Equally, however, we must provide a credible defense for the Falkland Islands against the possibility of further Argentine military adventures.” After noting some other difficulties, Onslow added, “I would therefore be most grateful for your help in ensuring that the difficulties we face are fully understood, and that Argentina does not receive arms from the United States that would oblige us to divert additional resources to counter the increased threat to our position.” (Department of State, Central Foreign Policy File, D820429-1171)

³ No memoranda of conversation of these meetings have been found.

⁴ See footnote 3, Document 381.

will find a process by which they can reach a peaceful solution of the dispute in accordance with the principles of the UN Charter." If possible, we would prefer not to take an active role in drafting a UN resolution on this subject. However, we would make our position known and are prepared to involve ourselves on a substantive text later if that appears essential to achieve a non-prejudicial resolution.

We recognize, of course, the delicacy and importance HMG attaches to the arms transfer issue. As you know, we anticipate phased actions later this year, following further talks with you. With the Argentines, I have informed the Foreign Minister only that we hope events will permit the Secretary to discuss with him in September the possible removal of our embargo on spare parts already purchased by Argentina.

Submission of our congressional certification report, required for new sales, is now planned for around the end of the year, depending on diplomatic and congressional developments. We will have ample opportunity to discuss this further. I want to make clear, however, that submission of a certification report would not, by itself, mean approval for specific arms transfers, these would be considered case-by-case and decided on the basis of a careful review of relevant US policies and interests.

Overall, I believe we share a common objective in preventing the introduction of Soviet weaponry into Argentina. More broadly, I think we can both agree that an enhanced United States position in that country would serve the interest we both have in maintenance of peace in the area.

Finally, I was pleased also to have an opportunity to review with you our position on the question of Belize. I will be writing you separately on this issue in the near future.

Thomas O. Enders. End quote.⁵

Shultz

⁵ In telegram 18455 from London, August 20, the Embassy reported: "FCO welcomed Enders response and is interpreting portion on UN resolution to mean that for now the USG plans to play a behind-the-scenes role which recognizes the need for realism on sovereignty negotiations. British presume we will be working with them in New York and elsewhere on this issue." (Department of State, Central Foreign Policy File, D820433-1002)