

393. Message From British Foreign Secretary Pym to Secretary of State Shultz<sup>1</sup>

London, September 16, 1982

*Begins:*

When we met on 29 July you told me that you would ensure that I was consulted before you took any decision to release the military supplies, which were held up by the US during the Falklands conflict, to Argentina.<sup>2</sup> I understand that the State Department have recently told our Embassy that a decision is now imminent.<sup>3</sup>

I still believe as firmly as I did when we met at the end of July that it is important that Argentina should continue to be denied arms and military supplies. The Argentine Government still refuses to accept any proper cessation of hostilities and is still keeping open the possibility of a further resort to force. To resume any supplies now, even on a limited basis, would give them the wrong signal and encourage those elements in Argentina advocating an irresponsible approach. Giving them such a signal could only make it harder to secure a return to the stability and good sense in the South Atlantic that is in all our interests.

---

<sup>1</sup> Source: Department of State, Bureau of Politico-Military Affairs, Falklands Crisis Historical Files, Lot 86D157, unlabelled folder. Confidential. The message was delivered by the British Embassy under a September 16 covering note from Wright to Shultz. A handwritten notation on the covering note indicates that the message was received in the Secretary's office at 2:30 p.m., September 16. (Ibid.)

<sup>2</sup> See Document 379.

<sup>3</sup> On September 11, Eagleburger informed Thomas "we would probably re-open the FMS pipeline to Argentina in the near future, and the move could come as early as this week." In telegram 257198 to London, September 14, the Department transmitted a summary of the meeting. (Department of State, Central Foreign Policy File, D820473-0526)

We also have to bear in mind that the more Argentina is able to re-equip her forces, the more of our own military resources, already stretched, we shall have to devote to the defence of the Falklands. That will inevitably mean that we shall find it more difficult to devote resources fully to our joint defence efforts in NATO.

Many other countries are watching American policy in this area closely. Any decision by you to resume supplies would make it very difficult for us to keep with us our EC partners, with whom we will be discussing this on 20 September, especially following France's unilateral decision to lift her embargo. Some EC countries would be able to supply particularly sensitive equipment.

I hope, therefore, that you will not take any early decision to release this equipment. If you do decide that you have no alternative then I would urge that you delay this as long as possible, certainly until after the EC meeting and that you release the equipment in stages over a period of time and with minimal publicity. It would also be very important to us that there should be no rush of new US contracts to supply military goods to Argentina in the categories not covered by the congressional embargo.

With best wishes.

*Ends.*