

397. Telegram From the Department of State to the Mission to the United Nations and the Embassies in Argentina and the United Kingdom¹

Washington, October 2, 1982, 0413Z

278457. Subject: (U) Secretary's Bilateral Meeting With Argentine Foreign Minister, September 27, 1982. Ref: Secto 13008.²

1. C—Entire text.

2. The Secretary opened by recalling how much he had enjoyed several visits to Argentina, a country which had impressed him greatly. Aguirre Lanari also recalled several prior visits to the U.S., particularly his first, as Vice President of the Argentine Senate in 1964 to address the U.S. Congress. Aguirre invited the Secretary to Buenos Aires and said he hoped to visit the U.S. often in the future, but with less pressing and troubling concerns than he had now. The Secretary replied that Aguirre was, had been, and would be on very friendly territory whenever he visited the United States. He asked Aguirre to tell him of his principal concerns.

3. Aguirre said that Argentina, as a government and a nation, was deeply preoccupied by the Malvinas war and its far reaching implications. The focus was now on the UN. It was more necessary than ever to ask the UN Secretary General to help the parties sit down together to negotiate the future status of the Malvinas. He was deeply gratified to have an opportunity to exchange views with the Secretary and seek U.S. collaboration in this effort. U.S. posture on this issue was of particular importance, to Argentina and to many other countries. Argentina recognized that the U.S. did not want to prejudice the substantive question of ultimate sovereignty but he hoped the U.S. would be able to support the Malvinas/Falklands resolution which had emerged from consultation with many countries. Aguirre then gave the Secretary a revised text of the Argentine draft resolution (reftel) pointing out the deletion from the operative paragraphs of all references to past UNGA resolutions. With this deletion, he said, he believed the United States should be able to support the resolution, even with our concern that it not prejudice the question of sovereignty. Aguirre said

¹ Source: Department of State, Central Foreign Policy File, D820510-0519. Confidential; Immediate; Exdis. Drafted by N.S. Smith (ARA/SC); cleared by Adams, Wayne, and in S/S-O; approved by Enders.

² Telegram Secto 13008, September 28, transmitted to the Department and Buenos Aires the text of the revised Argentine draft of the Falklands/Malvinas resolution given to Shultz by Aguirre Lanari at their September 27 meeting in New York. (Department of State, Central Foreign Policy File, D820500-0927)

Argentina also hoped some West European states would vote for the revised draft.

4. The Secretary received the text, saying the United States would study it carefully and looked forward to getting back to the GOA and working together on the resolution. The Secretary underlined the importance attached to assuring that the resolution not prejudice sovereignty and, coming after a very tense situation, not put too immediate time pressure on the negotiating process.

5. The Secretary commented in this connection that the U.S. was pleased the GOA had been able to reach an understanding with the British Government on mutual lifting of financial sanctions.³ He understood U.S. Treasury representatives had been helpful in this process. Aguirre nodded, saying the contributions of U.S. Treasury representatives in the negotiations had been very positive; their actions were widely known and appreciated by the GOA.

6. Aguirre asked whether the Secretary had any reaction to the revised text. The Secretary said he preferred to review the language carefully prior to making specific comments. The Secretary then commented that he had learned that often in such resolutions preambular sections were as important as operative ones. In this case, references to NAM declarations seemed to have the effect of prejudging the outcome of the sovereignty issue. Aguirre recognized that possibility but pointed out that the United States could make a formal declaration at the time of its vote, noting its non-acceptance of sections of the preamble yet nonetheless voting for the resolution because the operative paragraphs were consistent with the U.S. position. In that way, he said, the U.S. vote would not be seen as prejudging the sovereignty issue. The Secretary responded that in his experience reservations did not count for much. In the end, what mattered was how one voted. We would be happy to review the entire resolution and to provide the GOA with our views on its contents.

7. Aguirre thanked the Secretary, reiterating that Argentina had changed the resolution to try to make it acceptable to the U.S. and that with our long tradition of supporting negotiated solutions to threats to the peace, U.S. support for the call to negotiate the Malvinas/Falklands dispute was especially important. The Secretary replied that we always favored negotiation as the way to solve problems instead of hostilities. At the same time, if a resolution prejudged the issue it would not help

³ On September 14, Argentina accepted a U.K. proposal to mutually lift the economic sanctions. ("Falkland Sanctions Removed," *New York Times*, September 15, p. D20)

achieve those objectives. He again assured Aguirre that we wanted to work with the GOA to find an acceptable resolution.⁴

8. The Secretary commented that other issues were also highly important to our relations with Argentina. Aguirre agreed but reiterated his view that the UN resolution was indeed the overriding issue for Argentina because of its profound impact on the future of his country's most basic institutions, on the military and the body politic. The deep frustrations of Malvinas conflict could be exploited by extremists, with historical consequences. Casualty rates had been high; the Argentine people had suffered; the impact had been traumatic. Success at reopening negotiations was essential to assuring that this painful issue did not fester and do serious damage to the country's process of normalization and to its important relations with traditional friends.

9. The Secretary said we had followed closely Argentina's international financial situation and were pleased to have been able to play a constructive role in helping channel Argentina's important debt discussions in a positive manner.⁵ He was well aware of the underlying strength of the Argentine economy and hoped that after all the recent turmoil, Argentina would be able to retain its traditionally high standing in the international financial community. Aguirre stated emphatically that Argentina would assure its just debts were met, as it always had, and the present troubles would not lead to a default. He said Argentina had applied the same determination in fighting for the Malvinas, against great odds, resisting the temptation to internationalize the conflict (e.g. by turning to the Soviets); it would take a responsible attitude also on the debt issue.

10. Argentina's vote on the Puerto Rico issue at the UN came up several times during the conversation.⁶ Ambassador Kirkpatrick made clear our displeasure with the Argentine vote by quipping early that we would review Argentina's resolution on the Falklands more seriously than they had considered our views on Puerto Rico. Aguirre initially responded that Argentina had nothing to be ashamed of, but

⁴ Later revisions to the text placed the question of the Falklands/Malvinas on the provisional agenda of the 37th UNGA and deleted the detailed listing of NAM resolutions. Discussing this text with Garcia del Solar on October 6, Enders informed him "in a blunt exchange, that the U.S. has serious problems with the revised UN Falklands resolution." (Telegram 283693 to Buenos Aires and USUN, October 8; Department of State, Bureau of European Affairs, United Kingdom Political Files, Lot 89D489, Falklands—Telegrams 1982)

⁵ Argentina was negotiating with the International Monetary Fund for a standby loan after acknowledging that it could not meet its debt payments.

⁶ Reference is to Argentina's September 24 vote in favor of Cuba's unsuccessful appeal to the UNGA to place the issue of Puerto Rican independence on the 37th UNGA agenda. In telegram 271295 to all diplomatic posts, September 25, the Department summarized the voting. (Department of State, Central Foreign Policy File, D820498-0416)

when the Secretary interjected on the merits, he quickly changed focus. Aguirre said that while he had no doubt that any plebiscite in Puerto Rico would demonstrate the popularity of some form of continued association with the U.S., Argentina believed it had no choice but to support “those who had gone to great lengths to support Argentina at its time of need.” That did not mean Argentina would change its basic ideological orientation. The Secretary replied that there had never been a problem with Puerto Rico having an opportunity to express itself. The Cuban resolution was nonsense. He wanted to record with Aguirre his disappointment over Argentina’s vote on the issue. At the same time he assured Aguirre that our review of the Falklands text would be a serious one, based on its merits.

11. Aguirre noted ruefully that Argentine opinion was still highly critical of the U.S. role in the Falklands dispute, so much so that some would criticize him at home for the smiling photo of the Secretary and himself, which had just been taken. It was important, however, that both countries look to the future. Positive movement on the UN issue would strengthen the prospects for democratic institutionalization which could still suffer a serious reverse in Argentina. If the Argentine people could become convinced that a serious process were under way on the Islands that would undercut leftist extremists who would otherwise wrap themselves in the banner of nationalism in order to take center stage in Argentine politics. The Secretary said we very much wanted improved relations with Argentina and had taken steps to demonstrate that. He recognized the importance of containing extremism under difficult circumstances. He very much appreciated the opportunity to exchange views with Aguirre and was pleased that their photographs had been taken smiling together.

12. In a personal aside at the end of the meeting, the Secretary expressed his sympathy for the families of Argentines killed or wounded in the conflict. Aguirre expressed his appreciation. Aguirre also stressed that Argentina would continue to meet its international obligations and specifically would welcome foreign capital participation in its development.

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