

403. Message From British Prime Minister Thatcher to President Reagan¹

London, October 25, 1982

Begins

We are now approaching a debate on the Falklands at the United Nations General Assembly with the vote expected on 4 November. This is, as you will appreciate, of considerable importance to us and I wanted to let you know personally how strongly we feel about it.

The Argentine draft² is wholly unacceptable to the British Government and to the British people. It suggests that the maintenance of the present status of the Islands is a threat to world peace and must be ended whatever the people of the Islands may want: it recalls three earlier Argentine-inspired resolutions which were unacceptable to us and which the United States also declined to support: it refers to pronouncements of the Non-Aligned Movement which prejudged the dispute in Argentina's favour and dismissed the legitimate rights of the inhabitants of the Islands: and it calls upon us to resume negotiations.

Negotiations were of course in progress earlier this year³ when Argentina launched her military assault on the Islands without provocation or warning. Argentina subsequently ignored the appeals and instructions of the Security Council. Her action was widely condemned as a breach of the most important provisions of the UN Charter.

I am sure that you will understand how offensive it is to us that Argentina now comes before the General Assembly to seek a resumption of the negotiations which she herself broke off. The hypocrisy of this approach is shown up by the determination of the authorities in Buenos Aires (whatever their spokesman may say in New York) to keep open the option of a resumption of hostilities. Moreover it is clear that Argentina still contemplates only one possible outcome to negotiations with Britain—the transfer of the Islands to Argentina in defiance of the wishes of the people. To support her in the coming debate would be to encourage her in this unprincipled ambition and thus to set back the cause of peace. There can be no resolution of this issue until there is a fundamental change of heart on the part of Argentina. You will understand our insistence that the principles of the United Nations Charter, including those of self-determination and

¹ Source: Reagan Library, Roger W. Fontaine Files, [Falklands 11/01/1982–11/14/1982]. Confidential. Wright sent the message to Clark under an October 26 covering note. (Ibid.) Printed from a copy found attached to Document 405.

² See footnote 4, Document 397.

³ See Document 11.

the non-use of force, are as applicable to this as to other international problems.

We have deeply appreciated the great help and understanding which we have received from the USA since the crisis burst upon us at the beginning of April. I now ask for your help once more in supporting us in the vote on the resolution at the United Nations.

Ends.
