

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

Washington, November 1, 1982, 2006Z

306409. Subject: Message to the Prime Minister From the President on UNGA Falklands Resolution.

1. Secret–Entire text.

2. Embassy is requested to deliver today, November 1, the following message from the President to Prime Minister Thatcher. There will be no signed original.

Begin text:

Dear Margaret:

I have given careful consideration to the issues raised by your letter of October 25.² I understand the importance to you of the United Nations resolution on the Falklands, and appreciate your concerns.

When we were first approached by the Argentine representatives on their proposed resolution, we made very clear our objection to much of its content. They were the same objections which your letter

¹ Source: Reagan Library, Dennis C. Blair Files, United Kingdom 1982 (10/04/1982–11/01/1982). Secret; Niact Immediate; Nodis. Sent for information Immediate to Buenos Aires and USUN. Printed from a copy that was received in the White House Situation Room. Drafted from White House text; cleared in substance by Smith (ARA) and by Bremer, Sherman, and Binns; approved by Blackwill. (Department of State, Central Foreign Policy File, N820008–0633)

² See Document 403.

identifies.³ We emphasized that the United States could not accept any resolution which prejudged the questions of sovereignty or the outcome of any negotiation. We further stressed that we could not support any resolution with unrealistic deadlines on negotiations or other processes of peaceful settlement.

Argentina, however, now proposes to delete references to the Non-Aligned Movement's communiques which specifically prejudge the question of sovereignty, to reaffirm expressly principles of the UN Charter concerning non-use of force in international relations, and to make other changes which make the resolution more moderate.⁴ While the revised version suggests negotiations at an earlier rather than later date, we do not consider this to be a strict deadline. We conclude that the resolution in its revised form does not legally prejudice the position of either party in the dispute.

The United Kingdom is justifiably concerned that there was no reference to the recent hostilities or to self-determination in the resolution. The most recent revisions to the draft expressly refer to the cessation of hostilities and the intention of the parties not to renew them, coupled with reaffirmation of the principles of non-use of force and peaceful resolution of disputes. The United States assumes that any negotiations undertaken by the United Kingdom and Argentina would necessarily take into account the views of the Falkland Islanders. The reference to Resolution 1514 of the General Assembly underscores the principle of self-determination, and the revised draft now expressly refers to the necessity of taking the interests of the Islanders into account.

Our support for your position during the hostilities was based on our strong belief that disputes between countries should be resolved peacefully and in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. We continue to hold that belief and support your position that any solution to the problem must be accomplished in the context of all relevant elements of the UN Charter. We do not believe, however, that the resolution, as currently written, prejudices that position and consider that it is moderately positive in reaffirming the fundamental obligations of the Charter concerning the non-use of force. For these reasons we believe it reasonable now to vote for the substantially modified resolution.

We understand your reluctance to enter into negotiations when loss of life remains fresh in everyone's mind. We can appreciate your desire for a cooling off period and more concrete evidence from Argen-

³ See Document 403.

⁴ See footnote 3, Document 405.

tina that it will not resort again to further use of force. Nevertheless, we believe it is important that the options of negotiations or other means of peaceful settlement not be foreclosed, particularly in light of the fact that the Government of Argentina now suggesting negotiations is a different one from the one which launched the aggression.

Margaret, I know how you have anguished over this conflict from the beginning. Your courage and leadership throughout have been a source of deep personal inspiration to me. I count it as a privilege to have been able to support you and Britain at this critical moment. You may be absolutely confident that I would do it all again the same way.

Sincerely, /S/ Ron. End text.

Shultz