



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

17 February 1984

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Dear John,

Falklands/Argentina: Reply from Argentine Foreign Minister

We received late this evening the text of a letter in Spanish from the Argentine Foreign Minister to the Swiss Ambassador in Buenos Aires. This constitutes the Argentine reply to our confidential approach through the Swiss of 26 January. I enclose a preliminary translation of the Argentine reply, together with a shorter summary of its main points. The Argentines have already made public the fact that they have conveyed a reply to us, but we have not yet had any reports to suggest that they have made the contents public.

We propose to take the line in public, if asked, that we have received a reply and are studying it.

We shall be letting the Prime Minister had advice on the substance of the Argentine reply early next week.

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Yours ever,

Peter Ricketts

(P F Ricketts)
Private SecretaryA J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street

SUMMARY OF THE ARGENTINE FOREIGN MINISTER'S LETTER TO THE SWISS AMBASSADOR IN BUENOS AIRES

- (i) The Argentine Government favours a first exchange of ideas leading to substantive negotiations which cannot exclude sovereignty.
- (ii) Such negotiations on sovereignty over the Falkland Islands, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands should take place in the framework of relevant UN resolutions and with appropriate intervention by the UN Secretary-General.
- (iii) The proposed global negotiation would take due account of the interests of the inhabitants of the Islands.
- (iv) The Argentine Government wishes to eliminate all obstructions to the normalisation of relations between the two countries with the object of returning to the situation before the war.
- (v) The Argentine approach is essentially that set out in the Joint Anglo/Argentine Communiqué of 26 April 1967, which was jointly convened to the UN in June 1967.
- (vi) The Argentine Government has analysed with great interest the British Government's proposals of 26 January 1984 and considers that this British initiative constitutes a positive step in so far as it suggests an exchange of ideas at an official level leading to the progressive normalisation of bilateral relations.
- (vii) Such exchanges must also include the following themes:
- (a) Raising the Protection Zone (correctly named) in the South Atlantic.
 - (b) Ending the fortification of the Islands, construction of the strategic airport and the military concentration in the area.
 - (c) Guarantees that nuclear arms or artefacts be withdrawn from the region.
- (viii) An agenda comprising the themes proposed by Argentina and the UK would allow contacts to be initiated.
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(viii) In its approach to bilateral relations the Argentine Government:
- (a) assigns great importance to the definitive normalisation of Anglo/Argentine relations;
 - (b) considers ^{that} to this end the dispute over the Falkland Islands and Dependencies must be ended by peaceful means;

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- (c) agrees that secret meetings or negotiations are undesirable;
- (d) considers desirable a sincere exploration in good faith of all aspects of the problem allowing each side to consider the future prospects for formal negotiations;
- (e) considers that a UN peace-keeping presence in the Islands would improve the atmosphere and safeguard the security of their inhabitants;
- (f) considers the best way forward to be a preliminary exchange of ideas whose outcome should be conveyed to the UN Secretary-General. Such informal exchanges could lead the way to subsequent negotiations in which the UN Secretary-General could exercise the good offices mandated by the UN General Assembly.

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PRELIMINARY TRANSLATION OF ARGENTINE REPLY

Mr Ambassador:

I have the pleasure of addressing Your Excellency to ask you to be kind enough to bring the following reply to the attention of the British Government:

The Argentine Government, inspired by its dedication to peace, favours contacts which might mean a first exchange of ideas leading in due course to substantive negotiations. A realistic appraisal of the overall range of relations between Argentina and the United Kingdom makes it plain that those substantive negotiations cannot ignore the vital subject of sovereignty if a total solution to the dispute is to be achieved. Such negotiations about sovereignty over the Malvinas, South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands must be held within the framework of the relevant United Nations resolutions and with such intervention of the Secretary General, as those resolutions ascribe to him. A global negotiation such as that proposed by the Argentine Government would also grant due consideration to the interests of the inhabitants of the Islands as well as to the subject of economic and scientific/ technological cooperation in the area. It must be clear that the Argentine Government wishes to remove those obstacles which are impeding the normalisation of relations between the two countries; and it understands that the aim of that normalisation is a return to the pre-conflict situation in all its aspects. The framework of proposals must therefore not be significantly different in its substantive aspects from those which were expressly confirmed in the joint Anglo-Argentine communiqué of 26 April 1977.

As will be known, that communiqué was brought to the attention of the international community through parallel notes presented by the Permanent Representatives of the Argentine Republic and the United Kingdom to the United Nations in June 1977.

The Argentine Government has analysed with great interest the British Government's proposal of 26 January 1984 in which they suggest an agenda to include the following points:-

- (a) The reciprocal lifting of trade restrictions between the United Kingdom and Argentina.
- (b) The lifting of existing financial restrictions.
- (c) Arrangements for the return of the Argentine dead from the Islands, or, in the absence of this, for a visit by close relatives.
- (d) The reactivation of the air services agreement between both countries.

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(e) The resumption of cultural, scientific and sporting contacts.

(f) The raising of the level of official relations.

The Argentine Government consider that this British initiative constitutes a positive step insofar as it suggests the possibility of an exchange of ideas at official level leading towards the progressive normalisation of relations between the two countries.

Recognising the desirability of a profound examination of these questions, the Argentine Government is persuaded that there must also be included other questions of imperative importance which exist between both countries and which require immediate attention.

It therefore believes that it is essential to add the following subjects:-

(a) The raising of the Protection Zone which the United Kingdom purports to have established in the South Atlantic.

(b) A halt to the fortification of the Islands, to the construction of the strategic airfield and to the warlike concentration in the area.

(c) Guarantees that nuclear weapons or artifacts will be withdrawn from the region.

An agenda composed of the subjects proposed by Argentina and the United Kingdom could then allow contacts to begin. At the same time, the Argentine Government wishes to transmit to the United Kingdom the spirit of bilateral relations. The Argentine Government:

(1) Attaches great importance to the definitive normalisation of relations between the Argentine Republic and the United Kingdom.

(2) Considers that to achieve this - and this is what it wants - it is essential to put an end, through peaceful means, to the dispute over the Malvinas, South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands.

(3) Also agrees about the undesirability of secret meetings or talks, it being a fundamental point of its foreign policy to keep public opinion informed in accordance with the democratic style which now prevails in the Argentine Republic.

(4) Considers

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(4) Considers that at the present time it would be highly desirable to explore the matter sincerely and in good faith, taking into account all the elements involved and allowing each side to visualise the future perspectives of a formal negotiation.

(5) Considers, as it has indicated previously, that the presence of United Nations peace-keeping forces in the Islands, in place of other military forces, would serve to re-establish a better atmosphere in the area and ensure the security of their inhabitants.

(6) Considers that in order to fulfil a determination to put a final end to the separation existing between the two countries, the most advisable thing would be to hold, on a preliminary basis, an open exchange of ideas at the right moment giving an account of its content to the Secretary General of the United Nations. These informal exchanges would prepare the way for subsequent negotiations which would be held with the assistance of the Secretary General of the United Nations by virtue of the mandate of good offices received from the General Assembly.

With my warm respects to Your Excellency

(signed Caputo)

17 JAN 1961

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