

**446. Telegram From the Embassy in the United Kingdom to the Department of State<sup>1</sup>**

London, July 18, 1984, 1220Z

16002. Subject: UK-Argentine Relations: Talks Begin. Ref: London 14594.<sup>2</sup>

1. Confidential–Entire text.

2. According to FCO, talks began July 18 in Bern between British and Argentine negotiating teams under the chairmanship of Swiss State Secretary for Foreign Affairs Brunner. A Brazilian representative will be present as the other protecting power. The stated aim of the talks is normalization of relations between the two countries. In the public

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Department of State, Central Foreign Policy File, D840465–0296. Confidential; Immediate; Exdis. Sent for information to Buenos Aires.

<sup>2</sup> In telegram 14594 from London, June 29, the Embassy conveyed a summary of Middendorf's June 28–29 meetings with FCO officials on Central and South American issues in the OAS. On the Falklands/Malvinas, the Embassy reported: "Whitney and Thomas said they were hopeful that Britain and Argentina would find a way to start discussions on improving bilateral relations, using a formula that would protect the UK position that sovereignty could not be discussed without undercutting Alfonsin's position that this issue could not be excluded. Both emphasized UK firmness on sovereignty. Whitney said the two sides were now playing tennis behind closed doors with the UK making most of the running. Confidentiality was essential at this stage, but the British would brief us as soon as they could." (Department of State, Central Foreign Policy File, D840421–0226)

announcement (quoted below), no mention is made of whether the subject of sovereignty is to be discussed. If asked, the UK will refer to its previous position on that question.

3. FCO regretted that, at the request of the Argentines, Britain was unable to give its allies advance notice of the talks. UK Embassy Washington has instructions to brief the State Department at 0800 local time, three hours ahead of the public announcement to be made via a written parliamentary question in London, with simultaneous statements in Bern and Bonn.

4. The UK negotiating team is headed by FCO Assistant Under Secretary for the Americas David Thomas; the Argentine group is led by Assistant Under Secretary Delpeche. FCO expects the talks to last two or three days, and hopes this will be the first in a series of meetings with the Argentines. FCO would not provide details of the agenda, but stressed that sovereignty over the Falklands would not be discussed. (This will clearly be the British public position. An FCO staffer has intimated to us in the past that a compromise solution might be found whereby sovereignty would be discussed, but this fact would be kept secret. We don't know whether such an arrangement was part of the Anglo/Argentine deal.)

5. There follows the text of the public announcement to be released at 1600 hours London time July 18:

Quote. At the invitation of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, representatives of Argentina and the United Kingdom are meeting in Bern today. The conversation will be under the chairmanship of the State Secretary of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs with a representative of the Government of Brazil also present. End quote.

**Price**