

447. Telegram From the Embassy in Argentina to the Department of State¹

Buenos Aires, July 19, 1984, 2207Z

5643. USCINCSO for INTAFF, CINCLANT also for POLAD. Subj: Argentina Breaks Off Malvinas Talks. Ref: Buenos Aires 5564.²

1. (U) According to media reports, Argentina broke off talks with Great Britain over the future of the Malvinas Islands when British representatives reportedly refused to consider the sovereignty question.³ Foreign Ministry sources quoted by local press said the joint communique which was to have been issued at the end of the two-day meeting would have included the statement that "the British representatives were not yet prepared to study the sovereignty issue." The Argentine source reportedly said that the British replaced that phrasing with "the British representatives were not disposed to study the sovereignty issue."

2. (U) Foreign Minister Dante Caputo released the following statement at noon Argentine time today:

"The Ministry of Foreign Relations and Worship reports that on July 18 and 19, on an invitation of the Swiss Confederation and with the participation of representatives of the Federative Republic of Brazil, the delegations of the Argentine Republic and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Island met in Bern.

"The meetings, which were of an informal nature, were held with an open agenda with the purpose of exchanging points of view concerning the Malvinas, Georgias, and Sandwich Islands, and other points related to the problems affecting the relations between the two countries.

"At the beginning of the meeting, the Argentine delegation reasserted Argentina's sovereign rights over the Malvinas, South Sandwich, and South Georgia Islands. It also asserted that since the sovereignty

¹ Source: Department of State, Central Foreign Policy File, D840463-0817. Confidential; Immediate. Sent for information Immediate to Bern, London, USUN, Geneva, USCINCSO, and USCINCLANT, and for information to Asuncion, Bogota, Brasilia, Caracas, La Paz, Lima, Montevideo, Quito, Rio de Janeiro, Rome, Santiago, and Sao Paolo.

² In telegram 5564 from Buenos Aires, July 18, Ortiz reported that Caputo had informed him on July 17 of the forthcoming announcement of the direct Anglo/Argentine talks in Bern. (Department of State, Central Foreign Policy File, D840459-0844)

³ In telegram 16321 from London, July 20, the Embassy reported: "Foreign Secretary Howe and his deputy Baroness Young laid the blame squarely on Argentina for the failure of the Bern talks." The telegram also conveyed a summary of the talks and their breakdown based upon information received from the FCO. (Department of State, Central Foreign Policy File, D840465-0795)

matter constitutes the substance of the conflict with Great Britain, the other points of disagreement would be resolved in an expeditious and satisfactory manner if a serious and responsible solution was found to the sovereignty issue. In this regard the Argentine delegation reaffirmed the Argentine Government's willingness to find a solution to the conflict based on the recommendations made by the United Nations.

"For its part, the British delegation stated that it was not disposed to discuss the sovereignty issue. Since this circumstance impaired the objective of the Bern meeting, there was no purpose in continuing the talks."

3. (C) Comment: Swiss Ambassador Keusch called Ambassador Ortiz this afternoon to report that talks are officially suspended and that there will be no further "official" meetings in Bern. However, he understands that as of late evening Swiss time both sides were meeting together in "private" discussion. As of 5:30 p.m. Buenos Aires time we have heard no further information either from MFA or British Interests Section here concerning the status of such "private" talks.

4. (C) Although a thorough assessment will not be possible until the "private" talks and their substance can be confirmed, the abrupt breaking off of the scheduled discussions could lead Foreign Minister Caputo to raise the Malvinas issue with Secretary Shultz next week.⁴ If so, some suggestion of the position he might take with the Secretary may be indicated by local radio reports which have reported the government believes it has "given clear proof of its pacifist and open-to-negotiations stance, a position which is not shared by the British Government." The reported breakdown apparently came as a surprise to most Argentines who earlier today appeared to support the start of direct contacts with the British. End comment.

Ortiz

⁴ See Document 448.