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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

13 November 1985

FALKLANDS AT THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Thank you for your letter of 12 November setting out the Foreign Secretary's views on the options for handling the Falklands issue at the current UN General Assembly.

The Prime Minister thinks that tabling our own Resolution would have been a useful tactic had we taken the initiative early enough. But she acknowledges that it is probably too late to make a success of it now. We should therefore concentrate on amending an Argentinian Resolution in ways designed to attract as much support as possible for our position.

(Charles Powell)

L.V. Appleyard, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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PRIME MINISTER

FALKLANDS AT THE UN

You proposed to the Foreign Secretary the other day that we ought to table our own draft Resolution. The Foreign Secretary has now considered this, sees some attractions but thinks on balance that we are more likely to get a tolerable result by proposing amendments to an Argentinian Resolution, particularly if we focus on self-determination.

I think the truth is that having our own Resolution would have been a starter had the Foreign Office thought of it earlier and based their whole strategy on it. But it is probably too late to make a success of it now, although it could still be a means to confuse the Argentinians and throw them off course, leading them to table a "hard" Resolution of their own. But it is basically a matter of tactics rather than substance and I think we have to rely on John Thomson's advice.

Agree that we should concentrate on amending an Argentinian Resolution rather than tabling one of our own? *Yes*

CDP

We should think of

tabling initiatives early enough

no

(C.D. Powell)

12 November 1985

EPC



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

12 November 1985

Dear Charles,

Falklands at the UN General Assembly

Thank you for your letter of 7 November.

We have been considering the options open to us, in consultation with the Mission in New York. I enclose a short paper analysing the three main options. In the short term we are of course continuing to lobby hard to prevent an Argentine "soft" text being tabled. We called in the Swedish Ambassador on 8 November to make clear to him that the Argentine text, which the Swedes are peddling in New York, remains totally unacceptable to us.

[A late convert!]

Of the three options, the Foreign Secretary was himself, like the Prime Minister, inclined to favour tabling our own draft Resolution. That has the advantage of putting clearly on record our own position and our view of how the UN should deal with this issue. But the Mission in New York have recommended strongly that the result would very likely be a serious setback to our position at the UN. The Argentines, with their automatic majority, would be very tempted to move an amendment which would make the Resolution unacceptable to us. We would then probably find ourselves isolated in voting against such an amended resolution without demonstrating clearly the weaknesses in the Argentine position.

The Foreign Secretary has therefore reached the preliminary conclusion that, if the Argentines go ahead and table a resolution which seems likely to attract significant European support, we should aim to amend it. He sees the attractions of having our own text from the start but believes that amendments would be a more effective way of focussing the debate on whether the principle of self-determination applied to the Falkland Islanders. This is much stronger ground for us, and while we might well still lose a vote on this point, it would put many Europeans, including the French, on the spot. The result might be to increase the numbers abstaining on the "soft" Argentine text, because we would be demonstrating that it specifically excluded the principle of self-determination.

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The Foreign Secretary sees no attraction in the third option identified in the paper; that is, simply allowing an Argentine "soft" text - if one is tabled - to go forward while restating our familiar position.

Yours ever,
Len Appleyard
(L V Appleyard)
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq
10 Downing Street

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FALKLANDS AT UNGA 40: POLICY OPTIONS

1. The Argentines are thinking of tabling a "soft" resolution on the Falklands for this year's UNGA debate on 26 November. They have not yet tabled a draft text. But the Americans and the Swedes in New York have given us slightly differing versions (see Annex A and Annex B).

2. There are three basic policy options facing us:

A. To table our own draft resolution

Policy Table our own text (for example see Annex C), if possible before the Argentine text is tabled. Lobby hard on the basis of this text. Vote against any attempts to amend it. Vote against any parallel Argentine text.

Possible Outcome Situation is likely to be very confused initially, but Argentines will have some two weeks to decide how to respond. They could either table their own resolution in parallel and/or seek to amend the UK text by deleting the reference to self-determination and by including a reference to negotiations on sovereignty. Our text, unamended, would be unlikely to pick up positive support. Many of those who already abstain on the Argentine draft would do the same. If the Argentines tabled a parallel resolution, it would be carried by the usual 90 or so votes (if not more), making our thin support look like a major defeat. If the Argentines went for amendments to our text, they would probably carry them. It is difficult to judge what company we would then have. But if the Argentine amendments were "soft", we might have little support; if "hard", more.

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Advantages We would for a time have tactical surprise. We would be putting on record a firm statement of our constructive policy. The Argentines would be faced with the need (awkward in UN terms) to delete the reference to self-determination, although this would no doubt be accompanied by a proposal to add a reference to negotiations - much more attractive in the UN.

Disadvantages Our resolution would attract few votes in favour (though probably a large number of abstentions). The resolution could be amended by the Argentines to refer to the sovereignty dispute. A parallel Argentine text would attract many more votes in favour than ours. A defeat for our resolution would be a vote by the UNGA against our policy and specifically against our affirmation that the principle of self-determination applies to the Falklanders.

B. To amend the Argentine "soft" resolution if tabled

? How
Policy Use every means to prevent the "soft" text being tabled. Lobby very hard against the text when tabled, stressing in particular self-determination. Probably at a late stage table two amendments, the first referring to self-determination or the wishes of the Islanders, the second deleting the Argentine call for negotiations and inserting our own phrase on "discussions on practical measures to restore more normal relations". (See Annex D for possible amendments).

Possible Outcome Very difficult to judge. If we introduced late amendments, there would be considerable confusion. The vote on the self-determination text might be close. Our amendment deleting references to negotiations on the dispute would be easily defeated. If we lost both votes, the unamended "soft" text would be voted

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through, but possibly with less support than if we had not tabled amendments because we would have demonstrated that it specifically excluded the principle of self-determination.

Advantages Our two amendments would allow us to set our own policy, though not quite so clearly as if we tabled our own resolution. The French and others who attach importance to the principle of self-determination would be put on the spot by an amendment reaffirming that principle. They might decide to abstain on a resolution which had specifically excluded it.

Disadvantages A late amendment might suggest uncertainty on our part, though it could be tactically useful. A defeat for an amendment on self-determination would have the same effect as a defeat for our own resolution in distancing the UNGA from our basic case on self-determination.

C. Let the Argentine "soft" resolution be voted upon without amendment

Policy We would try by all possible means to prevent the "soft" text being tabled. If it were, we would lobby hard on the theme that it marked no real change from last year.

Possible Outcome Much would depend on when the French defection became widely known. If it became known early, we could expect a major erosion. If not, there must be an outside chance that we could prevent the Argentines from getting the 100 votes they have probably set themselves as a target.

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Advantages If we were to hold the line below 100 votes for the Argentines, the defeat would be qualified. We would avoid a UN vote against self-determination for the Islanders. We would have avoided a clear vote against our present policy.

Disadvantages There is a real risk of a major defeat, with damaging repercussions for some of our allies and future policy towards Argentina (eg on arms sales).

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TEXT GIVEN TO THE AMERICANS BY THE ARGENTINES (AMERICAN TRANSLATION)

The General Assembly

Having examined the question of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas) and having received the Secretary General's Report,

Conscious of the interest of the international community in the two Governments peacefully and definitively resolving all their differences,

Taking note of the interest of both parties, repeatedly expressed, in normalising their relations,

Convinced that this objective would be facilitated by global negotiations between the Governments which would permit them to reconstruct on a solid basis their mutual trust and to solve peacefully all their differences, including all aspects of the future of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas),

1. Requests the two Governments to begin negotiations with a view to finding methods of peacefully and definitively resolving the problems between both countries, including all aspects of the future of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas);
2. Requests the Secretary General to continue to use his good offices to assist the parties in the fulfilment of 'the request in paragraph 1 above';
3. Requests the Secretary General to report to the General Assembly at its 41st Session on the implementation of the present resolution;
4. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its 41st Session the item entitled 'The Question of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas)'.

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TEXT GIVEN TO THE SWEDES BY THE ARGENTINES (UNDERLINED PASSAGES INDICATE REFERENCES ADDED BY SWEDES)

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Having considered the question of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas) and having received the report of the Secretary General,

Aware of the interest of the international community in the peaceful settlement by the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom of their differences, in accordance with the United Nations Charter,

Taking note of the interest repeatedly expressed by both parties in normalising their relations,

Convinced that such purpose would be facilitated by a global negotiation between both Governments that will allow them to rebuild mutual confidence on solid basis and to resolve the pending problems, including the dispute on the Falkland Islands (Malvinas),

1. Requests the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to initiate negotiations with a view to find the means to resolve peacefully the pending problems between both countries, including the dispute on the Falkland Islands (Malvinas), in accordance with the United Nations Charter;
2. Requests the Secretary General to continue his renewed mission of good offices in order to assist the parties in complying with the request made in paragraph 1 above, and to take the necessary measures to that end;
3. Requests the Secretary General to submit a report to the General Assembly at its Fortieth Session on the progress made in the implementation of the present resolution;
4. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its Forty First Session the item entitled "Question of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas)".

POSSIBLE UK DRAFT RESOLUTION

The General Assembly

Having considered the question of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas),
and having received the report of the Secretary General,

Noting 150 years of continuous British administration of the
Falkland Islands,

Noting the interest expressed by both parties in normalising their
relations.

1. Affirms that the people of the Falkland Islands enjoy the
right of self-determination;
2. Calls upon the Governments of Argentina and the United
Kingdom to begin discussions on practical measures to
restore more normal relations between them without
prejudice to their respective positions on the question
of sovereignty.

UK AMENDMENTS TO ARGENTINE DRAFT

Delete 4th Preambular paragraph and insert:

"Convinced that the attainment of this objective must take account of the right of self-determination, reflected in Article 1 of the Charter of the United Nations".

Delete Operative paragraph 1 and insert:

"1. Requests the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom to begin discussions on practical measures to restore more normal relations between them, while maintaining the rights of the people of the Falkland Islands and without prejudice to the respective positions of the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom on the question of sovereignty".