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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

19 November 1985

Prime Minister

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CDP 20/xi

Dear Charles,

Falklands at the UN General Assembly

In your letter of 13 November you recorded the Prime Minister's endorsement of Sir Geoffrey Howe's proposal that the way to deal with a "soft" Argentine resolution was to amend it.

With the General Assembly debate little more than a week away, you might find it useful to have a round-up on the action we are taking and where matters stand.

Since August, posts in over 70 countries have been actively lobbying to get our views across on the crucial questions of sovereignty and self-determination. As soon as we got wind, in the middle of October, of a "soft" Argentine resolution, we instructed our missions to make plain that, despite any cosmetic softening of the text, Argentine intentions remained the same. Ministers too, of course, have been very active at the UN, at CHOGM and in bilateral contacts, for example Lady Young last week in Scandinavia. On the Parliamentary front, Mr David Crouch MP and his colleagues in the British branch of the IPU took a lot of trouble with Argentine Parliamentarians at the IPU Conference in Ottawa in September. We understand that the British branch of the IPU is planning a return fixture at Westminster for March next year.

According to Sir John Thomson, our message has been getting back to the Argentines. Although at the time of writing they have not yet tabled their resolution, the text is circulating widely in New York. The delay in tabling is no doubt due to the difficulty they have been having in finding respectable co-sponsors and also to some continuing uncertainty about whether the risks they are taking are acceptable. Their long hesitation no doubt reflects the impact of our lobbying. But though we can draw encouragement from that and from reports we have received from a number of countries assuring us that they will not change their vote, there is no doubt that many are tempted by the Argentine language, as was evident yesterday during the Prime Minister's exchange with M. Mitterrand.

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As the situation develops in New York, we are continually reviewing our lobbying instructions both to New York and to posts in the light of tactical considerations. We want to focus the debate on the key question of self-determination, and have prepared amendments reflecting this for deployment at the right moment. If these were carried (though this looks unlikely at present), this would be a major setback to the Argentine position, and would produce a new tactical situation in New York. We are meanwhile preparing messages reinforcing our efforts for the Foreign Secretary and the Prime Minister to send to a selection of their colleagues and planning to make full use of Ministerial meetings between now and the vote, for example at the Anglo-German Summit

In addition to this activity with governments, we have also been active with the media. We have given the COI film "The Islanders" a very wide distribution to posts abroad, and we have also used it repeatedly in London. Lady Young gave a briefing to foreign journalists on 18 November after showing them the film first. This has enabled us to put our views direct to Argentine public opinion, as Sr Caputo did to British public opinion with his Daily Telegraph interview published on 2 November. We shall shortly be subjecting some Argentine journalists to similar treatment.

Yours ever,

Len Appleyard

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Private Secretary

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