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10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

9 July 1986

Dear Lord Buxton,

I am writing to thank you and Lord Shackleton for your letter of 26 June in which you expressed concern about the implications for our interests of a fisheries agreement between the Soviet Union and Argentina.

I understand that Lord Shackleton and Sir Geoffrey Howe have already had a word about this. He will, no doubt, have confirmed to you that we have been aware of these negotiations for some time and have more than once left the Russians in no doubt about the risks for Anglo/Soviet relations that an agreement with the Argentines which did not take full account of our rights would pose. Mr. Shevardnadze's visit later this month will give us another opportunity of getting our views across to the Russians at the highest level.

As you say, agreement between the Russians and the Argentines could have destabilising effects, not the least of which could be to place obstacles in the way of reaching agreement on a multilateral basis. The Argentine attack, resulting in loss of life, on a Taiwanese vessel at the end of May, underlines both the delicate nature of the present situation and the need for agreed arrangements to deal with the fishery. We hope that this incident will help to convince all the nations involved of the logic of proceeding on a co-operative basis to establish a multilateral conservation and management regime while underlining at the same time the perils of the confrontational approach.

SPW

I have read the note enclosed with your letter and am sending it to Sir Geoffrey Howe who will, I am sure, read it with interest.

Yours sincerely

Raymond White

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