

PRIME MINISTER

cc: Mr. Coles

I attach Mr. Foot's reply to your letter, about which I forewarned you earlier in the evening.

No overnight response seems to me to be required. I have sent a copy of the letter across to the Foreign Office, and I have warned that you may want to consult the Foreign Secretary at OD/SA or Cabinet in the morning about any further response.

MAP

27 April 1982



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

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MAP  
Pen Office  
Foreign Office

The Office of the  
Leader of The Opposition

27 April

Dear Prime Minister,

Thank you for your letter.

I must say at once that, at such a moment of international crisis, I attach the greatest importance to any statement issued by the Secretary General of the United Nations, and I am shocked that the Government does not appear to share that view.

The Government should have responded positively to such an approach even before the matter was raised in the House of Commons to-day. Much the best response would have been for the Government to send a spokesman, preferably the Foreign Secretary, to meet the Secretary General to discuss the matter with him immediately and directly. The better the British case, the stronger the argument for such a mission.

I fully accept that it is Argentina which is in violation of Security Council Resolution 502 and the Government cannot complain of any lack of support on our part, but when, in the light of the latest events, the Secretary General issues a special appeal, the Government must respond in terms very different from the dismissive ones which you have selected.

I still urge, as I did in the House, that the Foreign Secretary should go to New York without further delay to talk with the Secretary General, and that no further major military action should be authorised until this has been done.

I write on behalf of a party which has given the strongest support to the role which the United Nations can play in international disputes, and I urge that all future Government action should be governed by the need to support the United Nations and its Secretary General.



I continue to be amazed that the Government's first response was not to propose a meeting of this nature. Human lives and great issues of peace are involved, and the proper way ~~is~~ for the British Government to be prepared to discuss them <sup>is</sup> with the Secretary General of the United Nations in response to his specific appeal.

I want to see our country retaining the world-wide support which hitherto has been forthcoming for the British case in this dispute. It is our allegiance to the United Nations Charter and the United Nations Organisation and its institutions which has helped us to command that support. If that great asset is destroyed or impaired at this moment, the responsibility will be yours.

W. M. K. Foot

The Prime Minister



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10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

27 April 1982

Dear Michael,

During Question Time this afternoon, you asked me about the Government's response to an appeal put out by the United Nations Secretary General yesterday.

I should first make it clear that the Secretary General's appeal took the form of a press release put out by his spokesman. It has not been circulated as a document of the Security Council or General Assembly, nor has it been communicated to Her Majesty's Government in any formal way.

It would be most unusual for any formal response to be sent to an appeal issued in this way. The United Kingdom's Permanent Representative nevertheless spoke to the Secretary General on behalf of the Government yesterday. He told Mr De Cuellar that any suggestion that we had failed to comply with Security Council Resolution No. 502 was unacceptable, and that it was Argentina which was in breach of the Resolution.

In view of the importance which you attached to these exchanges this afternoon, I shall of course release this letter to the press.

I am sending copies of this letter to David Steel and David Owen.

Yours sincerely

Robert Thatcher

The Right Honourable Michael Foot, M.P.