

VISIT BY MR RIDLEY TO THE FALKLAND ISLANDS: 22-29 NOVEMBER 1980

BRIEF NO 26

Summary of points covered and position reached in Anglo-Argentine talks -Essential Facts1. Rome, July 1977 (Officials)

- Argentina: insists on full transfer of sovereignty but accepts need for transitional period. Offers safeguards for Islanders, but insists on gradual integration with Argentina
- UK: suggests "mixed approach", i.e. different solutions for the Islands, the Dependencies and the maritime zones. Makes clear that problem is self-determination, not de-colonisation.
- Comment: no conclusions. Both sides testing the water.

2. New York, December 1977 (Ministerial)

- Argentina: presses 8 year joint administration plan, submitted in September, together with a list of safeguards for Islanders and a request for authorisation for Argentine interests to take over the Falkland Islands Company. Economic co-operation could be started provided the sovereignty question was resolved.
- UK: rejects joint administration scheme and again puts forward "mixed approach" in a sovereignty working paper. Emphasises that distinction is between inhabited and uninhabited territory not between territory and people. Submits papers on oil, fish and krill.
- Comment: most positive of the rounds, chiefly because Argentines understood our "mixed approach" proposals to mean that we were prepared to cede sovereignty quickly in the Dependencies and their maritime zones without any corresponding agreement on continued British sovereignty over the Islands themselves. They were later disillusioned.

3. Lima, February 1978 (working groups)(i) Political

- Argentina: claims Islands do not generate continental shelves and these are therefore outside scope of negotiations.
- UK: rejects this. Puts forward plan to remove sovereignty implications from Argentine occupation of Thule.
- Comment: stalemate on continental shelf and sovereignty. Basis for advance on Southern Thule (see Brief No 13).

(ii) Economic Co-operation

- Argentina: proposes the establishment of a tripartite (Argentina, UK, Islander) organisation to develop resources in parallel to solution to sovereignty problem.
- UK: unenthusiastic. Revives paper put forward at New York.
- Comment: no progress on either sovereignty or economic co-operation. Argentines stressed that they were only prepared to discuss economic co-operation as a package involving sovereignty concessions.

4. Geneva, December 1978 (Ministerial)

- Argentina: agrees proposals on Southern Thule and accepts some maritime co-administration proposals (similar to their own) in principle but rejects their being discussed under the sovereignty umbrella. Insists on transfer of sovereignty over Dependencies as price for co-administration.
- UK: tables Southern Thule solution and paper on co-administration of maritime zones.
- Comment: progress on Southern Thule (subsequently dashed by Islanders) but none elsewhere. No movement on sovereignty.

5. New York, March 1979 (Officials)

- Argentina: agrees to operate in spirit of Southern Thule agreement but refuses to discuss maritime zones in isolation from territory.

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UK: insists on sovereignty umbrella over all discussions.

Comment: unproductive, even a step backward because of Argentine disappointment on lack of Southern Thule.

6. New York, April 1980 (Ministerial, Island representative present)

Argentina: makes it plain that in future discussions they will expect sovereignty to be discussed; and that no progress towards practical economic cooperation in the area can be made without a commitment to revise the sovereignty position.

UK: Argentines made fully aware on paramountcy of Islanders' wishes.

Comment: exploratory talks only; no decisions taken. Argentine/Islander agreement on closer consultation on practical programme. Both sides agreed to refer back to respective Governments.

7. General

Argentine position throughout has been that the aim of negotiations is to transfer sovereignty to Argentina. If they are assured of full sovereignty, they are prepared to consider transitional arrangements and forms of economic cooperation.

UK position throughout has been that no solution is possible if it does not meet with Islander agreement and that the UK must retain sovereignty rights over the Islanders. Any solution must be a package covering all the various elements. Meanwhile, economic cooperation in the Dependencies' maritime zones could be effected to our mutual advantage without compromising the sovereignty position.