

FALKLAND ISLANDS: MESSAGE FROM THE POPE TO THE QUEEN

In the House today the Prime Minister referred to a message from the Pope to The Queen and ^{SAID} that this was ^{SENT} yesterday. She said that in his message the Pope hoped that the Government would make every effort to favour a peaceful solution on the basis of justice and international law and that he wished to believe a peaceful solution was still possible.

The message was in fact received by the Palace on 17 April. As can be seen from the text (attached), the Prime Minister used the word "yesterday" as it appeared at the beginning of the telegram.

We should not draw attention to this but, if asked, we should acknowledge that the message was sent and received on 17 April and that in using the word "yesterday" the Prime Minister was referring to the confirmatory text which she had in front of her at the dispatch box.

We should not be drawn on the text of the message other than what the Prime Minister has said but we should point out that our efforts are aimed at achieving a peaceful solution on the basis of justice and international law.

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I have the honour to communicate to you the text of a telegram that the Holy Father sent to The Queen yesterday.

"Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Buckingham Palace, London"

"The news reaching me about the obstacles being met by the search for a diplomatic solution to the grave dispute that has arisen between the United Kingdom and Argentina induce me to address Your Majesty in order to manifest to you personally my very profound preoccupation, which I have already expressed in the message which I addressed to the world on the solemnity of Easter. Certain as I am of the sincere desire of Your Majesty that an armed conflict be avoided, I permit myself to renew the appeal that I then made - and which I am also addressing to the President of the Argentine Republic - in the confidence that your Government will make every effort to favour a peaceful solution, on the basis of justice and international law. An armed conflict, in fact, apart from the painful consequences for the two countries directly involved, could not remain without damaging repercussions, the extent of which it would be difficult to foresee, upon the entire context of international relationships.

I earnestly pray that the Lord will grant wisdom and sentiments of magnanimity to all those upon whom lie such grave responsibilities, at this moment, enlightening them in the search for a peaceful solution which, though very arduous I wish to believe is still possible, IOANNES PAULUS PP II"

With the expression of highest consideration.