

98. Memorandum of Conversation¹

London, April 12–13, 1982

SUBJECT

Meetings at 10 Downing Street

PARTICIPANTS

British Side

PM Thatcher

ForSec Pym

DefMin Nott

PM's Personal Secretary

U.S. Side

Secretary Haig

Amb Walters

Amb Enders

David Gompert

THATCHER: We heard on the radio that they will withdraw if they can keep their flag. The EC came through for us.² The meeting “turned up trumps.” We are pleased.

HAIG: The approach I took in BA was true to our discussion here. I was brutally frank with them. I said the UK was ready for war and that the nation was united. I said this was inevitable if Galtieri did not alter course.

He was not bellicose but he has whipped up the people almost out of hand, though many of them are more pacific than jingoistic. The air force is fearful, the army is moderate, and the navy wants a fight.

¹ Source: Department of State, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Miscellaneous Files, March 1981–February 1983, Lot 83D210, D. Gompert. Secret; Sensitive. This memorandum appears to be an incomplete record, although no other records of Haig's meetings with Thatcher on April 12–13 have been found. According to Thatcher's memoirs, she met with Haig on three occasions on April 12 and once again on the morning of April 13. For her account of these meetings, see Thatcher, *Downing Street Years*, pp. 194–199. Rentschler's accounts of these meetings are in “Falklands Diary,” fo. 159–163. Haig's memoirs provide a more abbreviated account of his visit to London and discuss only one face-to-face meeting between himself and Thatcher. (Haig, *Caveat*, pp. 283–285)

² On April 10, in response to the Argentine landings, Ambassadors from the ten European Community member states approved a ban on all imports from Argentina. The previous day, they approved a measure prohibiting arms sales and deliveries from EC members to the Argentines. (Leonard Downie Jr., “Common Market Sets Ban on Argentina's Imports,” *Washington Post*, April 11, p. A1) For the text of the April 10 Joint Statement on the embargo issued by the EC member governments, see *American Foreign Policy: Current Documents*, 1982, p. 1300.

I spent all day bringing the thing around then got a counter-draft³ that destroyed everything. It called for sovereignty, Argentine administration, and buying the land from the islanders. I told them I would go to Washington and that there will be war. The Foreign Minister, who is intelligent and moderate, got us back on track. He got back to the junta; Galtieri had been drinking. This is what we are dealing with; the drinking is not unusual.

Galtieri said that the Cuban Ambassador returned to BA after a year's absence and offered them everything, also indicating that it reflected Soviet willingness to provide support. Galtieri said that he did not want to break Argentina's Western involvement. He said the Soviets are willing to sink British vessels. Galtieri said he couldn't turn to the Soviets. But if he is forced to haul down the Argentine flag, he will be gone in a week.

Your pressure has worked. There is an undercurrent of fear down there. The basic problem is that the threat of force alone is not enough to bring about withdrawal. Your fleet could be down there a long time. I think what they will try to do is run the blockade with Eastern European and Soviet ships.

We have worked up proposals that they may be willing to accept. Don't let up on the toughness of your demeanor.

THATCHER: We are deeply peace-loving, deeply democratic, and therefore deeply determined.

HAIG: Every effort we made in BA was to support your aims: (1) withdrawal of the Argentines; (2) restoration of British administration; (3) preservation of self-determination. It was ideal for me to stop here first. The Argentines were totally intransigent. They wanted Argentine rule or a commitment on sovereignty within a fixed, short-period. We brought them a long way. If they could confirm our final ideas, your needs would be met. The basic concept we have developed necessarily provides for some Argentine presence and a commitment on negotiations. (At this point, the Secretary described the approach verbatim from his talking points.)⁴

THATCHER: Did they accept?

HAIG: Yes, but they pulled back. Your local administration would be overseen to be sure that what it does is in accordance with the agreement.

THATCHER: Why do they want communication? There's already a lot of communication.

³ See footnote 5, Document 92.

⁴ See Document 95.

HAIG: You should know that these people are resentful about the exclusive character of the administration.

THATCHER: I don't understand; do you realize that they are changing the school curriculum already?

HAIG: They want more visits from the mainland. They say that the process is almost impossible from their standpoint.

THATCHER: Do they want to people the islands with Argentines?

HAIG: No.

ENDERS: They can't purchase or rent property for purposes of expanding business and trade.

HAIG: They say the 1971 agreement⁵ produced no results. They said the 1980 proposal⁶ was rejected by your back-benchers, not by the islanders. The only way they'll go along is with a date certain.

THATCHER: A date certain is inconsistent with self-determination.

PYM: Not necessarily.

HAIG: There would be no preconceived outcome. We drove them off that.

ENDERS: They say sovereignty is not negotiable.

⁵ See Document 1.

⁶ See Document 2.