

ALQ 050/3

16 APR 1982

cc: Sir Ian Sinclair ✓  
 Mr Giffard  
 Heads of: (124)  
 Information Department  
 Planning Staff  
 SAMD  
 Mr Fuller, Cabinet  
 Office

Private Secretary

## FALKLAND ISLANDS: DECOLONISATION

- AND 050/3044  
 (36)
1. The penultimate paragraph of your letter of 13 April to Mr Coles at No 10 referred to a point apparently made by Mr Costa Mendez to Mr Haig to the effect that the UK had previously accepted the Falkland Islands in a list of 'territories to be decolonised'. You commented that this may have meant no more than was implied by the history of UN discussion on the subject.
  2. Mr Costa Mendez' assertion is of course misleading.
  3. In 1960 the General Assembly passed its major decolonisation Resolution 1514 ('Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples'). (The UK abstained.) In 1961 the Assembly established a Special Committee (subsequently known as the Committee of 24) to examine the implementation of this resolution. In 1964 this Committee discussed inter alia a comprehensive report on the Falkland Islands, and chose to conclude that GA Resolution 1514 was applicable. The UK and Argentina were invited to enter into negotiations to find a peaceful solution to their differences over sovereignty. We did indeed participate in the Committee's discussions. But the UK representative (speaking as an observer) stated that the Committee's terms of reference did not empower it to consider territorial claims or disputes over sovereignty. He said that the UK would not be bound by its decisions and that we were in no doubts as to our sovereignty over the Falkland Islands. The UK also made it clear (in a full statement on the Falklands in a sub Committee) that it was for the Islanders to determine what their ultimate constitutional status should be. Similar reservations have been made each time the issue has been discussed in the United Nations.
  4. In co-operating with the Committee of 24 our position on sovereignty has thus been fully reserved.
  5. The regular reports on conditions in the territory that we have been making to the Secretary-General under Article 73(e) of the Charter equally imply no commitment to 'de-colonise'. That Article obliges administering powers only to promote 'self-government'.

N C R Williams  
 United Nations Department  
 K 156 233 4330

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