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10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

27 April 1982

Dear Richard,

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  
Margaret Thatcher

Done

NOTE TO PRESS OFFICERS

APPEAL TO BRITAIN AND THE ARGENTINE BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS ON 26 APRIL 1982

There was an exchange in the House of Commons today between Mr Michael Foot MP and the Prime Minister on this subject in which Michael Foot sought to establish what response had been given by HMG.

On the record

The Secretary-General's appeal had no formal status and no formal reply is called for. It was issued as a press release and not formally brought to our attention.

Unattributable

In our view the appeal was low key and the least that the Secretary-General could do given the pressure he was under. Sir Anthony Parsons called on him and said that we could not accept this. It was Argentina which was in breach of the Resolution and there was no question of HMG having in any way breached the terms of SCR 502. The Secretary-General took the point.

GMJ

27 April 1982