

322. Memorandum From Secretary of State Haig to President Reagan¹

Paris, undated

SUBJECT

Your meeting with Prime Minister Thatcher at the Versailles Summit

Although you obviously need none, it might be helpful to review some ideas associated with Falklands that you might draw upon in your discussion with Prime Minister Thatcher.² She will come to you concerned that you will join with Bonn and Paris in (1) urging a cease fire and negotiations before she has secured the Falklands or, (2) the longer term, a more magnanimous position on the ultimate status of the Islands to avoid a protracted conflict. It goes without saying there

¹ Source: Department of State, Executive Secretariat, Files of Alexander M. Haig, Jr., 1981–1982, Lot 82D370, (3) Falklands Crisis 1982. Secret. At the top of the memorandum, Goldberg wrote: “6/4/82 at U.S. Amb. Resid.” and “1½ hr.” Below this notation, Goldberg added: “Written by AMH [unclear] midnite 6/3/82.”

² No U.S. record of this meeting has been found. For the entire period of Reagan’s June 2–11 European trip, the President’s Daily Diary only records Reagan’s movements and not his individual meetings. In her memoirs, Thatcher recalled of the June 4 meeting: “My first and most important meeting was, of course, with President Reagan who was staying at the US Embassy. We talked alone, as he preferred it. I thanked him for the great help we had received from the United States. I asked him what the Americans could do to help repatriate the Argentine PoWs. I also requested that the American vote should support us in the Security Council.” (Thatcher, *Downing Street Years*, p. 231) Of Haig’s meeting with Pym on the South Atlantic which took place in Paris, the British Official History records: “The Secretary of State was still expressing his view that Galtieri would continue with hostilities from the mainland as the best way of keeping his job, and was not sure, as the British hoped and Reagan seemed to accept, that the return of prisoners would provide much leverage. He was still worried largely about the US position in Latin America.” (Freedman, *Official History*, vol. II, p. 531)

has been much on the airways, in the press, and from the French to contribute to such a state of mind on the part of the British.

Basically, Mrs. Thatcher will only really listen to you because, from the outset, she has sought to engage the United States in the role of guarantor for the future security of the Islands. It would be wrong, however, to assume that she would abandon her principles in order to achieve such an American guarantee. At the same time, we must be very careful not to find ourselves in the middle of an arrangement which would be totally unacceptable to Argentina and thus lead to a permanent state of crisis.

Mrs. Thatcher's success thus far in the crisis will obviously loom large in her own calculations. Her popularity is at its peak, and she could well be contemplating the calling of an early election to strengthen her mandate even further. Thus, she will be reluctant to deviate from her strong, principled course which has served her well so far, especially in the face of the sacrifices it has entailed. Beyond that, I believe the character of the woman is such that she will be very reluctant to join the Labor or Social Democratic opposition parties or even the troublesome moderate wing of the Conservative Party in an alignment against her more loyal constituency on the right.

Attached are talking points drawn largely from the draft message I gave you enroute to Paris.

Attachment

Talking Points Prepared in the Department of State³

Undated

TALKING POINTS

—Admire your courage and determination: your military campaign has been impressive. With courage and great sacrifice, Britain has defended the rule of law.

³ No classification marking. No drafting information appears on the talking points, which are typed in all capital letters. The content of the talking points was also reflected in a June 1 draft letter, which had been prepared in the Department of State for Reagan to send to Thatcher but was not sent. According to a handwritten comment by Goldberg which appears on a copy of the draft: "RR decided against sending this letter while aboard AF #1 [Air Force One] enroute to Paris on 6/2/82 because of his planned meeting w/ Mrs. T. [Thatcher] on 6/4/82 & RR's desire to 'keep her thinking' per Clark." (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Haig Papers, Department of State, Day File, June 2, 1982 Falklands)

—We are proud to have assisted you in this endeavor, for your case has been ours. I know you recognize that because our support has remained steady, we have suffered political setbacks in Latin America.

—Right now it is important for both of us to look to the future. Once you accomplish your military objectives on the Islands, Buenos Aires is likely to dig in its heels—refusing a ceasefire and declaring that Argentina has lost a battle but will continue the war.

—Thus, you, and to a lesser extent, we, could face the beginning of a painful, prolonged war of attrition in the South Atlantic.

—You know our position: We continue to support a political settlement based on Security Council Resolution 502, of which negotiations form an integral part.

—We need to know your position as this stage of the conflict nears an end.

—I am told that you too still support Resolution 502. What is your attitude toward negotiations?

—You have been quoted as favoring independence or “quasi independence” for the Falklands. Would it be best, at this stage, to suggest that the Islanders will remain British or become independent? Doesn’t this risk convincing the Argentines that they have no choice but to continue the conflict?

—How do you see handling the sovereignty issue? Wouldn’t ambiguity on this and the question of self-determination assist a political settlement?

—Also, what is your thinking on a peacekeeping force? Would you permit Latin American participation and how would the peacekeeping nations participate, if at all, in the process of reaching a political settlement?

—I know these are difficult questions and that you are undoubtedly focused on the course of the battle on the ground. But I believe we also need to think about the longer-term implications of the conflict.

—Beyond getting the Argentines off the Islands, I believe we should decide together how best to restore peace in the South Atlantic by putting Resolution 502 into practice in such a way as to reduce the potential for protracted hostilities. This is in your interest as well as ours.

—I welcome your thoughts.