



Margaret Thatcher

Sir,

I have better cause than most to remember that Chile, led at that time by General Pinochet, was a good friend to this country during The Falklands War. By his actions the war was shortened and many British lives were saved.

There were indeed abuses of human rights in Chile and acts of violence on both sides of the political divide. However, the people of Chile, through successively elected democratic Governments, have determined how they should come to terms with their past. An essential part of that process has been the settlement of the status of General Pinochet and it is not for Spain, Britain or any other country, to interfere in what is an internal matter for Chile. Delicate balances have had to be struck in Chile's transition to democracy, balances with which we interfere at our peril.

General Pinochet must be allowed to return to his own country forthwith. Next week, Britain will welcome the democratically-elected leader of a country which illegally invaded British territory, causing the loss of more than 250 British lives. It would be disgraceful to preach reconciliation with one, while maintaining under arrest someone who, during that same conflict, did so much to save so many British lives.

Yours faithfully,
Margaret Thatcher