

CONFIDENTIAL

RECORD OF THE FIRST MEETING BETWEEN MINISTER OF STATE AND THE ARGENTINE UNDER-SECRETARY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AT THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, BUENOS AIRES, 26 JULY 1979, 4.45 pm

Present:

The Hon Nicholas Ridley MP  
Mr H M Carless CMG  
Mr J S Chick  
Mr S M J Butler-Madden  
Mr K D Temple  
Mr R E Gozney

Comodoro Carlos Cavandoli  
Ambassador Carlos Ortiz de Rosas  
Comodoro Carlos Bloomer-Reeve  
Sr Angel Oliveri López  
Sr Fernando Tesón  
Sr Sola

1. Comodoro Cavandoli opened by introducing his team of officials. He explained that Foreign Minister Pastor would see Mr Ridley in an hour and suggested that in the meantime the reinstatement of Ambassadors and the Falkland Islands be discussed. Because of Mr Ridley's delayed return to Buenos Aires there was little time to spare.
2. He outlined the moves made during 1979 towards the restoration of Ambassadors. When in London he had made a formal proposal for restitution and been given a letter for Brigadier Pastor from Lord Carrington. Comodoro Bloomer-Reeve had subsequently been to London to explain the Argentine attitude on the level of Ambassadors and the desire to effect an exchange as soon as possible. The Argentine Government understood that it would take 3 or 4 months for HMG to find a new nominee. They agreed that the communiqué at the end of Mr Ridley's visit should refer to the resumption of relations at ambassadorial level. When HMG were ready the Argentine Government would put forward their request for agreement for their nominee. He asked for Mr Ridley's views on the next steps.
3. Mr Ridley thanked Comodoro Cavandoli for receiving him, for helping with his travel arrangements to the Falklands, and in particular for rescuing him, by sending a special plane, from the bad weather of Comodoro Rivadavia.
4. He agreed with Comodoro Cavandoli's account of the exchanges to date and was ready to issue a joint communiqué announcing agreement in principle to exchange Ambassadors. It was unfortunate that news of this agreement had appeared in the Argentine newspapers and sad that the fact that Mr Carless was not to be Ambassador had leaked. This leak had caused the British to hesitate. He hoped that exchanges between the two parties could be kept confidential; he had a letter

/for

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

RECORD OF THE FIRST MEETING BETWEEN MINISTER OF STATE AND THE  
ARGENTINE UNDER-SECRETARY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AT THE MINISTRY OF  
FOREIGN AFFAIRS, BUENOS AIRES, 26 JULY 1979, 4.45 pm

Present:

The Hon Nicholas Ridley MP  
Mr H M Carless CMG  
Mr J S Chick  
Mr S M J Butler-Madden  
Mr K D Temple  
Mr R E Gozney

Comodoro Carlos Cavandoli  
Ambassador Carlos Ortiz de Rosas  
Comodoro Carlos Bloomer-Reeve  
Sr Angel Oliveri López  
Sr Fernando Tesón  
Sr Sola

1. Comodoro Cavandoli opened by introducing his team of officials. He explained that Foreign Minister Pastor would see Mr Ridley in an hour and suggested that in the meantime the reinstatement of Ambassadors and the Falkland Islands be discussed. Because of Mr Ridley's delayed return to Buenos Aires there was little time to spare.
2. He outlined the moves made during 1979 towards the restoration of Ambassadors. When in London he had made a formal proposal for restitution and been given a letter for Brigadier Pastor from Lord Carrington. Comodoro Bloomer-Reeve had subsequently been to London to explain the Argentine attitude on the level of Ambassadors and the desire to effect an exchange as soon as possible. The Argentine Government understood that it would take 3 or 4 months for HMG to find a new nominee. They agreed that the communiqué at the end of Mr Ridley's visit should refer to the resumption of relations at ambassadorial level. When HMG were ready the Argentine Government would put forward their request for agreement for their nominee. He asked for Mr Ridley's views on the next steps.
3. Mr Ridley thanked Comodoro Cavandoli for receiving him, for helping with his travel arrangements to the Falklands, and in particular for rescuing him, by sending a special plane, from the bad weather of Comodoro Rivadavia.
4. He agreed with Comodoro Cavandoli's account of the exchanges to date and was ready to issue a joint communiqué announcing agreement in principle to exchange Ambassadors. It was unfortunate that news of this agreement had appeared in the Argentine newspapers and sad that the fact that Mr Carless was not to be Ambassador had leaked. This leak had caused the British to hesitate. He hoped that exchanges between the two parties could be kept confidential; he had a letter

/for

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

for Brigadier Pastor from Lord Carrington and it would be most unfortunate if its contents were to reach the press. The personal life of Mr Carless had to be considered; he had been an excellent Chargé in Buenos Aires and the suggestion that he was not acceptable as Ambassador was unfortunate for him personally. It would have been nicer if the British Government had been able to post him, probably to another capital as Ambassador, without this fuss.

5. Comodoro Cavándoli understood Mr Ridley's concern. He wished to make clear how much he regretted the public exposure. The Foreign Ministry knew of some of the sources which had made the affair public and regretted that they had not followed the correct form. As had been said before, the Argentine Government had the highest opinion of Mr Carless and hoped that the reasons for their position were understood. The Argentine press were quick to take up this issue and some people used it for the wrong reasons and objectives. He understood the need for confidentiality and claimed that it was not the Foreign Ministry or the Argentine Government who had been responsible for making the issue public.

6. Mr Ridley hoped that both governments would be able to make clear their opinion of Mr Carless and repair the damage done. Apart from announcing the agreement to restore Ambassadors through the joint communiqué he had arranged for a question to be asked in Parliament as it rose for the summer recess the following day. He did not know how long it would take to find a suitable candidate for Ambassador but perhaps one could be found by the end of the year. In the meantime Mr Carless would be left in Buenos Aires as Chargé d'Affaires. When the time came Ambassador Ortiz de Rosas would be welcomed in London and in the meantime the British side would keep his nomination confidential.

7. Comodoro Cavándoli said that the Argentine request for agreement would be held back but he wanted to be sure of the agreement in principle to exchange Ambassadors.

8. There followed some discussion on the form of the communiqué and it was agreed to leave it over until the following day's session.

9. Ambassador Ortiz de Rosas said he wished to make the point that the Foreign Ministry had taken all measures to protect the name of Mr Carless. When the newspaper "La Nación" published the story (on 22 July) the Foreign Ministry had put out a denial for the sakes of both Mr Carless and himself. Mr Ridley hoped that the source of the leak could be discovered.

10. Comodoro Cavándoli suggested that the subject of the exchange of Ambassadors had been covered; the Argentines would expect a name by the end of the year and the timing of the nominations should be contemporary though not necessarily simultaneous. Mr Ridley

/explained

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

explained that in referring to the end of the year he had no particular date in mind. Comodoro Cavandoli believed that bilateral relations would not realise their full potential until Ambassadors were reinstated. He asked that all efforts be made to bring forward the date and said that in the absence of Ambassadors important matters referred to in Lord Carrington's letter could not be carried forward. Mr Ridley agreed but pointed out that it was not the British Government who had withdrawn Ambassadors, and that the delay was due to the Argentine inability to accept Mr Carless.

11. Comodoro Cavandoli believed that all possible efforts should be made to improve bilateral relations. Mr Ridley reciprocated the feeling; pointing out that he had come to Argentina before any other major country. Comodoro Cavandoli recalled that his discussions in London had brought out certain common themes, including the need for parallel progress on economic and political relations. Argentina had a demand for sovereignty (over the Falkland Islands) that needed to be met. Martínez de Hoz had put forward ideas for economic cooperation when in London in May. Comodoro Cavandoli thought that there were five years in which to work. Mr Ridley agreed that it was time for the two countries to discuss much and that they had a number of mutual interests. Many British people lived in Argentina; Britain did substantial trade with Argentina. He was convinced that much more could be done. Britain could also help on technical matters. He would like to include all these aspects in any negotiations.

12. The two countries also had a common interest in the Antarctic seas and continent. Britain and Argentina should have a common position on scientific exploration and exploitation which would cover maritime rights and even the search for oil.

13. On the Falkland Islands HMG believed it was right to talk about the dispute and his visit to the Falklands had convinced him of this. The basic ground rule was that any solution had to be acceptable to the Islanders. His discussions in the Islands had made him believe that some solution was just possible, but both sides needed to make concessions. The dispute was to the disadvantage of all three countries. In New York at the end of September Lord Carrington and Brigadier Pastor might start to plan how negotiations could take place. Feelings in the Falkland Islands ran high and it would be infinitely easier if discussions could be entirely private. He was sure that all aspects should be discussed at the same time and was ready to do so any time after the Foreign Ministers had met. The dispute was, however, one of the most difficult anywhere in the world.

14. Comodoro Cavandoli said he shared Mr Ridley's ideas and believed that negotiations need not wait until Ambassadors were reinstated. A meeting between the Foreign Ministers in September would be a good opportunity and the Argentines believed that a preparatory meeting between himself and Mr Ridley could be useful. He agreed with

/Mr Ridley's

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

Mr Ridley's insistence on privacy; this would also help to reduce public interest. Mr Ridley had no objection in principle to a preparatory meeting but the timing would be difficult. He needed to report to Lord Carrington and discuss the issue in the light of his visit to the Falklands and by the time he returned to Britain on 8 August it would be holiday time. If a preparatory meeting was not possible then they could meet in October or whenever was convenient to the Argentines. It was important that the British side had time to clear their thoughts before entering on discussions.

15. Senor Oliveri López took up Mr Ridley's reference to the Antarctic. The Anglo/Argentine relationship over the Antarctic had been fluid and fruitful. During the Buenos Aires meeting on the Living Resources Convention the claimant States had agreed a position which resulted from a British initiative. The other aspects, that is oil and fishing, would be an important part of negotiations in September or October. Mr Ridley feared that if Britain and Argentina did not establish a close relationship over Antarctic matters they would both lose out. There were possibilities for an Anglo/Argentine partnership into which Chile might be brought later.

16. Comodoro Cavánoli then left to consult Brigadier Pastor. In his absence Ambassador Ortiz de Rosas emphasised that since 1965 very little had been said publicly by either side about the negotiations. The problem was press speculation. Mr Ridley said that his only public statement in the Falklands had been his interview on the local radio. Anything else that might appear would be speculative.

17. On the return of Comodoro Cavánoli, there was some discussion as to where a meeting preparatory to the Foreign Ministers' meeting might be held and Comodoro Cavánoli said he would prefer New York or Geneva.

18. Comodoro Cavánoli and Mr Ridley agreed that their second session might include discussion of the EEC, trade, Vietnamese refugees, events in Africa, the new Caribbean States, Nicaragua and perhaps Human Rights. Mr Ridley felt it was better not to say too much about the Falkland Islands until the negotiations re-started.

19. The meeting finished at 6.00 pm.

CONFIDENTIAL