

**16. Telegram From the Embassy in Argentina to the Department of State<sup>1</sup>**

Buenos Aires, March 24, 1982, 1949Z

1671. Subject: Falklands/Malvinas Dispute: Argentine Concerns.  
Ref: (A) London 6107;<sup>2</sup> (B) Buenos Aires 1638.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Department of State, Central Foreign Policy File, D820157-0409. Confidential; Priority; Exdis. Sent for information to London, USUN, Montevideo, and Santiago.

<sup>2</sup> See Document 14.

<sup>3</sup> See Document 15.

1. (C-Entire Text).

2. Summary. The GOA, having failed so far to elicit a response from HMG to the proposal for a permanent negotiating commission, seems increasingly inclined to write off the current round of negotiations on the Falklands/Malvinas. The next Argentine move will probably be to take the issue again to the UN's Committee of 24.<sup>4</sup> The GOA might apply pressure by cutting off services now provided to the Islands, but we doubt that an attempt at a "military solution" will be made any time soon. Foreign Minister Costa Mendez and others in the GOA are looking for ways to enlist U.S. support for the Argentine cause. This issue is likely to complicate Argentine-U.S. relations, particularly as matters of importance to US arise in the UN and the NAM where Argentina will continue to seek support for its claim on the Islands. End summary.

3. As reported in Ref B, Foreign Minister Costa Mendez and Under Secretary Enrique Ros on March 23 gave me their version of the weekend incident in the South Georgia Islands. They also took the occasion to assert their concern over the direction in which the underlying dispute seems to be headed.

4. Ros said the GOA proposed in the February talks with HMG that the two sides establish a permanent negotiating commission. The British delegation purportedly agreed to recommend the proposal to HMG, but the Argentines have subsequently heard nothing. Ros thought that must mean a rejection of the proposal. Ros added that the GOA would then be obliged again to take the dispute to the UN, to the Committee of 24.

5. Costa Mendez observed that the weekend affair, particularly the insult to the Argentine flag, has aroused nationalist feelings here. The Foreign Ministry tries to calm these emotions, but that is getting increasingly more difficult to do. The Minister next reverted to a theme we have heard from him before: "You (the USG) will sometime have to take an interest in this." When the Malvinas problem comes up President Galtieri allegedly often asks "what do the Americans say?" According to Costa Mendez, he has continued to explain to the President that we are only kept informed, not consulted. But, given our

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<sup>4</sup> The United Nations General Assembly established the Committee of 24, known more formally as the Special Committee on Decolonization, in 1961 in order to monitor the implementation of UNGA Resolution 1514, the "Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples," which affirmed the right of all peoples to self-determination and called for the end of colonialism. It was the Special Committee that in 1964 confirmed that the provisions of the Declaration applied to the Falklands/Malvinas.

security interests, the tradition of the Monroe Doctrine<sup>5</sup> and the like, we will have to become concerned, in the Minister's opinion.

6. I replied that we would most certainly not wish to see the negotiations break down. We do have a strong interest in seeing this dispute between two friends resolved. The way to do that is through negotiations between the two parties. As for the Monroe Doctrine, I recalled reading that Daniel Webster<sup>6</sup> had made clear to the Argentines in 1841 that it did not apply retroactively, and thus did not apply to the Malvinas problem.

7. Comment. The cynical view here, especially among the politicians, is that the GOA has brought this ancient quarrel up to center stage as a means of diverting the attention of the Argentine people away from their economic woes. I am not so sure. The talks with the British seem to have evolved quite naturally into a stalemate, given the time elapsed and the inability of the British to negotiate on sovereignty. In any event, the GOA has now gotten itself into a domestic political position where it will have to do something if the proposal for a permanent commission is not accepted.

8. We are not inclined to take very seriously the rumbling here about a "military solution." It seems more likely that the "other measures" the GOA threatens will at least initially take the form of a renewed plea in the UN and perhaps a reduction in the level of diplomatic relations with HMG. The Argentines also have open the possibility of making life more difficult for the Islanders, particularly by cutting off air service. With respect to the UN, HMG's estimate of its chances there (Ref A) is clearly not shared by the GOA which continues to count on NAM and G-77 support. (We assume that Robin Fearn's remark about Argentina's military government did not indicate an expectation that the problem would be easier to deal with if Argentina had an elected government. The politicians, particularly the Peronists and the left-wing radicals, are even more bellicose than the military when it comes to the Malvinas).

9. We do think that at least some elements in the GOA are quite serious about trying to enlist U.S. support for their Malvinas case in the context of our closer and more cooperative bilateral relationship. We have managed to stay pretty well clear of this dispute since Web-

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<sup>5</sup> First articulated by President James Monroe in his State of the Union address of December 2, 1823, the Monroe Doctrine refers to the policy that regarded any attempts by a European country to expand its colonial holdings in the Western Hemisphere or to interfere in the affairs of any sovereign state in the Americas as an act of aggression to which the United States would respond. At the same time, the Doctrine pledged that the United States would refrain from interfering in the affairs of existing European colonies in the Americas or in the internal affairs of the European countries themselves.

<sup>6</sup> Secretary of State from 1841 until 1843 and again from 1850 until 1852.

ster's time and there is no reason to change course now. But we should recognize that the Malvinas (and the Beagle too) are likely to be a complicating factor in our relationship. Complications may particularly arise in relation to issues in the UN and the NAM where Argentina will continue to look for support from those who frequently do not share our views.

**Shlaudeman**