

18. **Telegram From the Embassy in Argentina to the Department of State¹**

Buenos Aires, March 25, 1982, 2211Z

1718. Subject: HMG Request for U.S. Help in South Georgia Dispute. Ref: London 6687.²

1. (S—Entire text).

2. There are clearly some ugly possibilities in this situation. As I understand it, Foreign Minister Costa Mendez asked HMG to hold off when he learned on Tuesday³ that the *Endurance* had been sent to South Georgia to take off the Argentine working party. Anthony Williams, the British Ambassador here, in turn asked that the GOA find a way

¹ Source: Department of State, Central Foreign Policy File, D820160-0043. Secret; Niact Immediate; Exdis. Sent for information Immediate to London.

² See Document 17.

³ March 23.

ASAP to have the group depart. The FCO in London is pressing for Argentine action. But, according to Williams, Costa Mendez now says that the presence of the *Endurance* in the area has become widely known and the GOA would appear to be succumbing to British pressure if it agreed to evacuate the men. It appears likely that the Argentine Navy will in fact act if the *Endurance* attempts to remove the working party.

3. Williams has explored the perceptible alternatives, including various possibilities for legalizing the entry of the Argentines into South Georgia, but so far he has had no success. He believes a way must be found to freeze the situation until a solution can be found. He has suggested informally to me that the USG call on both sides to stand down. The *Endurance* would then presumably proceed to Stanley for re-fueling, tensions would ease and perhaps a way out could be negotiated without undue damage to either party's claim to sovereignty.

4. I agree with Williams (and please protect him) that any USG intervention must be directed at both sides. An attempt on our part simply to get the Argentines to withdraw the working party, as HMG requests, has little prospect for success. What would be needed in my judgment would be parallel messages from the Secretary to Carrington and Costa Mendez calling for the two countries to take no further action and perhaps offering our good offices. The problem with this is that it gets us into the middle of a dispute with no resolution in sight. I am far from certain, for example, that at this point the Argentines on South Georgia would agree—or that the GOA would let them agree—to a legalization of their entry even if HMG could find a way. Presumably the working party would depart after finishing the scrap job, but that will require four to five months I am told.

5. Under Secretary Ros has asked me to come in tomorrow morning specifically to inform me on the current state of GOA relations with HMG. I shall urge restraint.⁴ But on balance, barring suddenly fortuitous developments, I think we also need a high-level message to both sides which at a minimum does the same thing.

Shlaudeman

⁴ See Document 20.