

**57. Memorandum From Secretary of State Haig to
President Reagan¹**

Washington, April 3, 1982

SUBJECT

Falkland Islands Dispute

The Falklands crisis presents us with difficult issues.² We will continue to be dependent upon our close ties with the U.K. as we work a wide range of global issues. If Moscow, the Allies, and the Third World believe we have failed to support the British against an overt use of force, our position as a global power will have been adversely affected. At the same time, we also have much at stake in our relations with Argentina. Our steps in the weeks ahead will have to be carefully nuanced to take into account these conflicting interests.

¹ Source: Reagan Library, NSC Latin American Affairs Directorate Files, Falklands/Malvinas: NSC & Staff Memos, 1982. Secret. Attached to the memorandum is an April 5 handwritten note from Poindexter that reads: "President was verbally briefed on the contents." An attached NSC correspondence profile also indicates that Reagan was verbally briefed.

² In his April 2 Evening Report to Reagan, which briefly summarized the day's events, Haig concluded on the Argentine landings: "We must proceed cautiously and objectively on this question—not endorsing Argentine force while not unnecessarily jeopardizing our relations with Argentina." (Reagan Library, Executive Secretariat, NSC Agency File, Secretary Haig's Evening Report (03/25/82-04/21/82))

On the Falklands dispute, the British have no reason to complain about our support to date: your personal intervention with Galtieri,³ our strong public statements; and our support for the British in New York.⁴ London has asked for three other immediate actions from us.⁵

—Withdraw our Ambassador from Buenos Aires. I will tell them we consider it unwise to cut off our most effective and possibly influential channel of communication.

—Consider taking the issue to the OAS. We believe this would severely damage U.K. (and our) interests since their case would elicit little support in that body (which is already on record in support of the Argentine claim).

—Stop arms shipments to Argentina. U.K. is unaware we have not yet made the required certification of Argentina's human rights record to allow shipments. We will continue our hold on the certification and so inform the U.K.

At the same time we must bear in mind our important interest in retaining as much as we can of the new relationship you have forged with the government in Buenos Aires. They have been a key supporter of our broader regional goals, especially in Central America. Also, Argentina is already heavily dependent on Soviet grain purchases; we must avoid giving the USSR new opportunities such as the establishment of an arms supply relationship.

Our calculated policy of balance will become increasingly difficult to sustain if the British are forced to take military action. It will therefore be important for us to use our influence in both capitals to seek a non-military solution before the British fleet arrives in about two weeks. But if diplomatic maneuvers fail, and if the U.K. requires greater support from us, we should be prepared to consider ways to be responsive while bearing in mind our interests in Argentina.

³ See Document 41.

⁴ See footnote 3, Document 50.

⁵ See Documents 46 and 50.