

389. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in the United Kingdom¹

Washington, September 9, 1982, 0027Z

252648. Subject: Message From Foreign Secretary Pym Regarding UNGA Resolution on Falklands. Ref: London 19530.²

1. (C–Entire text).
2. For Embassy’s information, there follows the text of a letter from Foreign Secretary Pym to Secretary Shultz, delivered on September 3:

¹ Source: Department of State, Central Foreign Policy File, D820465–1255. Confidential; Priority; Exdis. Sent for information Priority to Buenos Aires, USUN, and Mexico City. Drafted by K. Smith (EUR/NE); cleared by Pendleton, O’Connell, McManaway, and in S/S–O; approved by Blackwill.

² In telegram 19530 from London, September 7, the Embassy noted FCO sensitivities concerning U.S. actions, reporting: “We have just learned that the British Embassy has instructions to deliver a message from Pym to Secretary Shultz urging that the U.S. exercise caution concerning Argentina’s Falklands resolution at the UNGA. (We have not seen the text.)” (Department of State, Central Foreign Policy File, D820462–0791)

Begin text: I have read with interest the exchanges between Tom Enders and Cranley Onslow about the Falkland Islands.³ I have been thinking about the handling of the debate at the United Nations which will result from the Mexican initiative⁴ and I thought you might like to have this personal account of our thinking on the matter which is, I know, also of great interest to you.

As you know, we are more than willing to live at peace with Argentina and to normalize our economic and commercial links as soon as this is possible. But I do not suppose that you will be surprised to hear that we shall oppose any call on us to enter into negotiations about the future of the Falkland Islands with Argentina. As you know, we had embarked upon a new attempt to reach a negotiated settlement when Argentina chose to break off the negotiations and attack us. The physical and psychological effects of that attack will be with the Islands for a long time to come, as will the constant risks from the mines so indiscriminately scattered by the occupying Argentine forces. The personal and economic cost to this country has also been great and neither parliamentary nor public opinion would understand if we were to contemplate resuming negotiations in the circumstances that now exist.

After a reasonable period of reconstruction we shall want to take soundings of Islander opinion about the future. I would be surprised if, after what has happened, they opted for any closer association with Argentina. Britain will certainly not be prepared to push them in this direction. Given our responsibilities towards the people of the territory under the UN Charter, and against the background of Argentine insistence that negotiations must lead to a transfer of sovereignty despite the Islanders' clear opposition, it would be irresponsible for us to allow others to think that negotiations between the UK and Argentina offer a realistic way ahead for the foreseeable future. I believe that our position will be widely understood in the many countries which have shown sympathy and understanding for us in the events of recent months.

The draft resolution which Argentina and Mexico have been working on is wholly unacceptable. The references to previous General Assembly resolutions and to Non-Aligned pronouncements do not help. But even if they were taken out and any suggestion of a timetable for the completion of negotiations removed, we would still vote against anything which calls on us to negotiate with Argentina and which fails to accord to the Falkland Islanders the fundamental right to determine

³ See Document 386 and footnote 2 thereto.

⁴ See footnote 2, Document 385.

their own future. I should like to feel sure that the United States will not consider giving its support to any such text.

I look forward to the talks which we shall be having on this and other subjects this month. End text.

Shultz