

408. Message From President Reagan to British Prime Minister Thatcher¹

Washington, November 2, 1982, 2027Z

Dear Margaret:

I have just received your message² and would like to respond immediately, given the importance of the issue to both of us.

I fully understand that negotiations are not acceptable to you, having just paid so much in blood and treasure to repulse the Argentine invasion. We have no intention to press you—or to see you be pressed—into negotiations before you are ready. Equally, we have no intention to take a position on the substance of the matter that is in any way prejudicial to your position on the questions of sovereignty and self-determination. Indeed Resolution 1514 contains stronger references to

¹ Source: Reagan Library, Dennis C. Blair Files, United Kingdom 1982 (11/02/1982). Secret; Flash. Sent in telegram WH07645 from the White House to the Cabinet Office via Cabinet Office channels.

² See Document 407.

self-determination than it does to the principle the Argentines proclaim, "territorial integrity."

Margaret, my country has always supported you and always will in defeating any effort to solve the Falklands dispute by force. You know that we have always been neutral on the question of sovereignty. And we have always favored peaceful solution of the issue by negotiation. I am well aware that it was the Argentines that interrupted negotiations by attacking the Islands. But I do not think that in itself is reason not to support a solution by negotiations sometime in the future. It is hard for the United States to have any other position.

Reading your message, I believe more weight ought to be given to the text of the resolution as it now stands. The Brazilian amendments have made it much less objectionable. It was on the basis of this new text that my colleagues informed Argentina and other sponsors that we would support it. In particular, the references to de facto cessation of hostilities and the intention of the partners not to renew them takes us a good ways towards the formal renunciation of hostilities we both have been working for, although I would agree with you that they are not equivalent.

At the time of the vote, our representative will put clearly on record our views that force must not be used again to solve the dispute, that the underlying question of sovereignty is not and cannot be prejudiced by the resolution, and that the aspirations of the Islanders must be taken into account.

I am truly sorry that we disagree on this matter and for my part will do everything in my power to make sure this resolution is not abused. You may be confident that the United States will continue to abide by the jointly shared principles which guided both our countries through the Falklands crisis to its successful conclusion.

With best wishes,

Ron