

430. Action Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Motley), the Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs (Newell), and the Acting Secretary of State for European Affairs (Kelly) to Secretary of State Shultz¹

Washington, September 22, 1983

SUBJECT

U.S. Position on the Falklands Resolution in the UNGA

Issue for Decision

U.S. vote on the Argentine resolution in the UNGA on the Falkland Islands.

¹ Source: Department of State, Central Foreign Policy File, P830157-1004. Confidential. Drafted by D. Jett (ARA/SC) and C.K. Stocker (EUR/NE) on August 30; cleared by Haass, J.R. Binns (EUR/NE), R.B. Howard (ARA/SC), M.G. Kozak (L), R. Perry (P), Johnson, and L. Kildav (ARA). Jett initialed for all clearings officials except for Kildav. The action memorandum was forwarded by Bremer to Clark under a September 28 covering memorandum which summarized the U.S. position on the resolution and which sought Clark's concurrence. (Department of State, Central Foreign Policy File, P830157-1003)

Essential Factors

We have obtained from the Argentines a draft resolution on the Falklands which they intend to introduce in the upcoming UNGA (Tab A).² L has determined that none of the additions or changes in the new version are of any material substantive significance when compared to last year's (Tab B).³ We expect Mrs Thatcher to raise the Falklands question and this resolution when she meets with the President on September 29.⁴

Since the current version of the Falklands resolution is legally equivalent to last year's, we should support it on grounds of policy consistency. Any backing away from last year's yes vote would have an adverse impact on our bilateral relations with Argentina, which continues to care deeply about the issue. A shift would also have an unfortunate effect on hemispheric perceptions of U.S. reliability and convey the wrong signals regarding U.S. attitudes toward Latin America.

HMG is still opposed to being pressured into any negotiations on Falkland Islands' sovereignty which do not proceed from the principle of self-determination. Nevertheless, the British reluctantly accept the need for the USG to be consistent on this issue; they hope, however, that we would oppose any changes to the current version which would be more prejudicial to their position. Our support for the existing Argentine Resolution and opposition to prejudicial amendments should encourage the Argentines to maintain the moderate tone of the draft.

Recommendation:

That we vote in favor of the current draft of the Argentine resolution on the Falkland Islands in the UNGA and oppose changes in the resolution which we consider objectionable. If you approve, we will indicate in the briefing materials for the President's conversation with Prime Minister Thatcher that we would take such a stand (EUR, ARA, IO and Ambassador Kirkpatrick favor).⁵

² Attached but not printed.

³ Attached at Tab B but not printed is a September 1 memorandum from Gudgeon to Howard which analyzes the draft Argentine UNGA resolution.

⁴ See Document 431.

⁵ Shultz approved the recommendation on September 27, adding the following notation: "Clear with NSC maybe by Hill-Clark." On September 28, Hill sent to Clark a memorandum outlining the situation as well as Shultz's decision. (Department of State, Central Foreign Policy File, P830157-1003)