

433. Telegram From the Embassy in Italy to the Department of State<sup>1</sup>

Rome, November 8, 1983, 1312Z

26714. Dept pass to The Hague Immediate and to AmEmbassy London. Subject: Deputy Secretary Dam's Meeting November 7 With Prime Minister Thatcher.

1. Secret-Entire text.

2. Deputy Secretary Dam met November 7 with Prime Minister Thatcher for a discussion which covered Grenada, INF, arms control, the Middle East and Argentine certification.<sup>2</sup> British participants, in addition to Thatcher, were Foreign Secretary Sir Geoffrey Howe, and Thatcher's Private Secretary John Coles. U.S. participants, in addition to Deputy Secretary, were Assistant Secretary Richard Burt and DCM Edward Streator.

[Omitted here is discussion of issues unrelated to Argentine certification and the South Atlantic.]

39. Argentine certification. Thatcher said she was disappointed we appeared ready to vote with Argentina in the UN on the Argentine resolution.<sup>3</sup> She recalled that the UK had abstained on the Grenada resolution.<sup>4</sup> It will put us into acute difficulty, she said, if the US resumes arms shipments; "it will be misunderstood in Britain if the US supplies an Argentine buildup to fight Britain. We would have to be vigorously critical." Moreover, she said, "it could cause repercussions on public opinion in Britain." In view of the recent reports of anti-semitism in Argentina, it would be odd if the US were to sign a certificate on human rights at this point. Howe said that certification would cause a real problem with Anglo-US positions related to INF. He noted that it was curious that there was less anti-Americanism in

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Department of State, Bureau of European Affairs, United Kingdom Political Files, Lot 89D489, PREL Falklands 1983 (Nov.-Dec.). Secret; Immediate; Nodis.

<sup>2</sup> No U.S. memorandum of conversation of this meeting has been found. Dam met with Thatcher at Chequers.

<sup>3</sup> UN General Assembly Resolution 38/12 on the Falklands/Malvinas was adopted by the UNGA on November 16. In telegram 3345 from USUN, November 17, the Mission provided a breakdown of the voting: "87 Yes (US)—9 No—54 abstentions, as compared to 1982's vote of 90 Yes (US)—12 No and 52 abstentions." (Department of State, Central Foreign Policy, D830675-0405) For the text of the resolution, see *Yearbook of the United Nations*, 1983, p. 1085.

<sup>4</sup> Reference is to UN General Assembly Resolution 38/7, adopted November 2, which called for the "immediate cessation of the armed intervention and the immediate withdrawal of the foreign troops from Grenada." The United States, along with eight other nations, voted against the resolution; the United Kingdom abstained in the vote. For the text of the resolution, see *ibid.*, p. 214.

France where the nuclear weapons were not American. But in Britain, these issues are blurred and plans to sell American weapons to Argentina would impact on INF deployments in the UK.

40. Dam said that the US would resist language going beyond last year's resolution. Moreover, we will take steps to consult closely on this issue as it evolves. Burt said that the US position was to favor a resolution consistent with that of last year; if it is not radically changed, we will support it.

41. On certification Dam said that this procedure derives from congressional concerns about human rights and it applies to various countries. With the emergence of a democratic government in Argentina, it is a foregone conclusion that we will certify. However, he took the Prime Minister's point on anti-semitism. DepSec said that cooperation with Argentina was desirable over the long term for everyone. Certainly the Argentine military should have relations with other military. Thatcher underlined that the Argentines still had not renounced hostilities. Dam said that the US was not rushing into arms sales. The Argentines may try to buy commercially in the US, and the US Government will have less influence in that sphere. Thatcher said that Argentina is strapped for cash. She trusted that none would help to make purchases that would be used against Britain. The UK had unfrozen funds and UK banks were in on IMF loans. If the banks are making loans for the purchase of arms to be used against Britain, HMG would have to tell the banks that they were going ahead against the desires of the government.

42. Howe called attention to two factors in connection with certification. On timing, he said that the further the distance from Grenada the better. Moreover it was important to be sure that Alfonsín was firmly in place<sup>5</sup> and to recognize that if he honored his pledges it would make things easier. Further, he suggested very close consultation on the types of arms to be supplied. Dam said that US thinking was along the same lines. While there were all kinds of stories out of Washington about sales to Argentina, this meant only that discussion was in progress. He agreed that the US and UK should stay in touch so that the British would have a clear view of the emerging US position. Howe agreed that the British needed a clear understanding on how sales would be controlled by the US.

43. Thatcher said that if arms were sold to Argentina it would be a "bad thing". Indeed, she said, it would be "extremely damaging." Alfonsín continues to stress that Argentine-British talks should deal

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<sup>5</sup> Alfonsín was elected Argentine President on October 30.

with the issue of sovereignty. She noted that not a single Argentine had inhabited the Falkland Islands for 150 years.

44. Dam promised to report in detail the evolution of US thinking.

45. This cable has been cleared by DepSec Dam.

**Rabb**