

Mr Colas

(2)



With the compliments of


THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

Prime Minister.

To note that our reply to Argentina
is likely to be delivered any time
between now and about 14 April.

A.F.C. $\frac{6}{4}$.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE
SW1A 2AH



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Classification and Caveats

CONFIDENTIAL

Precedence/Desk by

IMMEDIATE DESKBY

1230Z

ZCZC 1 ZCZC
 GRS 2 GRS
 CLASS 3 CONFIDENTIAL
 CAVEATS 4
 DESKBY 5 DESKBY
 FM FCO 6 FM FCO
 PRE/ADD 7 TO IMMEDIATE BERNE
 TEL NO 8 TELEGRAM NUMBER
 9 RFI PRIORITY BRASILIA, UKMIS NEW YORK, PORT STANLEY, WASHINGTON,
 10 EC POSTS
 11 RELATIONS WITH ARGENTINA
 12 1. Ministers have now decided the terms of our response to the
 13 Argentine message of 17 February. We should be grateful if you
 14 would seek an early meeting with Brunner to tell him of our
 15 response and ask that the Swiss Ambassador in Buenos Aires be
 16 instructed to convey it to the Argentine Government (if at all
 17 possible to Caputo himself).
 18 2. We believe that the procedure used in January remains
 19 appropriate. My second IFT contains the text of a Speaking Note
 20 which we hope the Swiss will agree to convey to Keusch, giving
 21 him discretion to leave it with the Argentine authorities, as
 22 he did on 26 January. We hope that the Swiss will regard
 23 this as a suitable basis on which to continue to play the
 24 constructive role they have performed so far. Their position
 25 in any talks that get under way is discussed in MIFT.

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File number	Dept Private Office	Distribution FI GENERAL
Drafted by (Block capitals) P F Ricketts		
Telephone number 233 4641		
Authorised for despatch <i>P F Ricketts</i>		
Comcon reference	Time of despatch	

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 2 3. As to timing we note that Caputo is due to visit New York
 3 from 8 April for talks with the UN Secretariat and to go on from
 4 there to Washington. I see considerable advantage in the Swiss
 5 conveying our reply to Caputo (underline next word) before his
 6 departure. If the Swiss judge that this is not (not) possible, we
 7 would prefer to await his return to Buenos Aires (on 13 April) so
 8 that the reply can be given to him.
 9 4. You will see that we wish to carry forward the process of
 10 working towards more normal relations with Argentina. But we
 11 cannot agree to a discussion of sovereignty forming any part of
 12 this. There is no flexibility whatsoever on this point. The
 13 Argentine message of 17 February, prepared when Gobbi was
 14 managing this area of their policy, envisaged preliminary
 15 exchanges leading to quote substantive negotiations unquote which
 16 quote cannot overlook sovereignty unquote. It indicated that
 17 whatever the basis that might be agreed for the opening of talks,
 18 Argentina would subsequently seek to press the sovereignty issue.
 19 If they did this, we would be obliged to discontinue the talks.
 20 Caputo, on his visit to Berne on 27 February, showed a more
 21 realistic readiness to concentrate on confidence-building,
 22 leaving sovereignty aside (para 5 of your telno 65). The Swiss
 23 are thus well placed from their own dealings with Caputo to drive
 24 home the point that sovereignty is not for discussion, as both
 25 I and the Prime Minister made clear to M. Aubert on 2 April.
 26 5. You will also see that we cannot accept the three points
 27 which the Argentines proposed (in tendentious terms) for
 28 inclusion in an agreed agenda. We would therefore prefer there to
 29 be no (no) formal agenda. The Swiss Ambassador in Buenos Aires
 30 will need, in presenting our speaking note to the Argentines,
 31 to reinforce orally our views on sovereignty and on the
 32 Argentines' proposed items. We hope the FDFA will agree to
 33 instruct Keusch accordingly.
 34 6. The Swiss should ensure that the Argentines are in no

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Catchword

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OUT TELEGRAM (CONT)

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 2 doubt about the firmness of our position that talks can only take
 3 place on the clear understanding that discussion of the future
 4 status of the Falkland Islands cannot form part of them and
 5 that if they were to persist in raising the subject, the talks
 6 would cease.

7 7. For Washington and UKMis New York: separate telegram of
 8 guidance will follow as soon as it is clear whether the Swiss can
 9 act with Caputo before he leaves Buenos Aires.

10 8. See MIFT.

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 12 HOWE

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Classification and Caveats
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Precedence Deskby
IMMEDIATE DESKBY 1230Z

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TEL NO

1 ZCZC

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5 DESKBY 1230Z

6 FM FCO

7 TO IMMEDIATE BERNE

8 TELEGRAM NUMBER

9 RFI PRIORITY BRASILIA, UKMIS NEW YORK, PORT STANLEY, WASHINGTON,

10 EC POSTS

11 MIPT: RELATIONS WITH ARGENTINA

12 SOVEREIGNTY AND AGENDA

13 1. You should tell the Swiss that we have taken note of what

14 M. Aubert told me on 2 April about Caputo's view on the way in

15 which the sovereignty issue might be handled in the talks and,

16 in particular, what he said about the Argentine Government's need

17 to be able to say that their position on sovereignty had been made

18 clear to the British side (on the understanding that it would not

19 be discussed further). You should go on to say that, speaking

20 frankly, we have an equal and opposite problem, namely that we

21 must be able to reassure public opinion in this country and in

22 the Falklands that sovereignty had not repeat not been raised in

23 our discussions with the Argentines.

24 2. Against this background, you should say that we believed

25 that this problem could be tackled in the following manner.

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Telephone number 233 4641		
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2 Having made clear to the Argentines our position that sovereignty

3 was not for discussion, the Swiss should add that if Argentina

4 wished to repeat its position on sovereignty for the record,

5 this would have to be done entirely separately from the talks.

6 The Swiss should explain to the Argentines that they would expect

7 us to rebut any such statement, but should also say that they

8 understand that a separate exchange of statements along these

9 lines would not repeat not lead us to call off the talks before

10 they began.

11 3. As to the best way of providing for a self-contained

12 exchange of statements on sovereignty, you should tell the Swiss

13 that we see two possibilities:

14 (a) a public statement by the Argentine Government, to which we

15 would respond publicly. Such an exchange would focus media

16 attention on the basic dispute about sovereignty and risk

17 souring the atmosphere for the talks. It would therefore have

18 to be separated in time as widely as possible from the opening of

19 the talks and might take place when the talks were announced

20 or very shortly thereafter.

21 (b) alternatively, the Argentines could communicate to the

22 Swiss, for transmission to us, a written or, preferably, oral

23 statement of their position, to which we would make an appropriate

24 response through the same channel. This exchange would take

25 place shortly before, but clearly separately from, the opening

26 of talks. The fact of the exchange would be made public, but

27 not its contents.

28 4. Alternative (b) strikes us as the most promising way of

29 resolving the dilemma described in para 1 above and comes as

30 close as we can to the suggestion M. Aubert put to me on 2 April.

31 We recognise that its successful implementation would require

32 adroit diplomacy by the Swiss (though we have no doubts about

33 their capacity on that score). We hope that they will be

34 prepared to commend it to the Argentines.

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 2 5. As regards the agenda, we would prefer the talks to be held
 3 without a formal agenda, although we would propose to raise our
 4 six points. Keusch should confirm this to the Argentines if
 5 asked. The handling of the three additional items proposed by
 6 the Argentines will also require clear instructions to Keusch
 7 ~~and sure-footed work by him.~~ The speaking note is designed to
 8 dissuade the Argentines from pursuing these items. We hope that
 9 Keusch will emphasise the point in it that we regard the three
 10 Argentine subjects as falling plainly within our responsibilities
 11 for the Falklands. He should also warn them that if they
 12 nevertheless were to persist in raising their three points, we
 13 should respond appropriately and would feel entitled to raise
 14 similar questions relating to the Argentines' own military
 15 dispositions in the region and Argentina's nuclear activities.
 16 Keusch should be aware, but should not repeat not reveal to the
 17 Argentines, that we do not repeat not envisage that we would
 18 break off the discussions if the Argentines did insist on
 19 raising the three subjects during the talks.
 20 6. On modalities, the speaking note advocates an early meeting,
 21 without specifying precise dates or the venue. We have noted
 22 from your telno 103 that the Argentines would accept meetings
 23 in Berne or Brasilia alternately. This departure from their
 24 previous insistence on negotiations in the framework of the
 25 United Nations is welcome. We agree that the suggestion that
 26 the talks open in Berne be presented to the Argentines as a
 27 Swiss initiative. The Swiss could add, if they thought it
 28 desirable, that they understood that this would be acceptable
 29 to us. If the Argentine response through the Brazilians leaves
 30 us with a four-sided initial meeting, this arrangement, although
 31 cumbersome, would be a price worth paying for keeping the talks
 32 out of the United Nations. If Brunner indicates that the Swiss
 33 see themselves as convoking the first meeting, working closely
 34 with you and your Argentine colleague on the practical

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2 arrangements, this would be acceptable to us. We also envisage
3 you and HM Ambassador at Brasilia alternately forming part of our
4 delegation, which would be headed by a senior official from
5 London.

6 7. See MIFT.

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Classification and Caveats

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 TEL NO 8 TELEGRAM NUMBER
 9 RFI PRIORITY BRASILIA, UKMIS NEW YORK, PORT STANLEY, WASHINGTON,
 10 EC POSTS
 11 RELATIONS WITH ARGENTINA
 12 FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF SPEAKING NOTE
 13 BEGINS:
 14 1. The British Government have asked the Swiss Protecting Power
 15 to convey to the Government of Argentine the British Government's
 16 view on the next steps towards the progressive normalisation of
 17 relations between the two countries.
 18 2. The British Government have studied with care the message
 19 from the Argentine Foreign Minister, received through the
 20 Protecting Powers on 17 February, containing the Argentine
 21 Government's reply to the British proposals put to them by the
 22 Swiss Protecting Power on 26 January.
 23 3. The British Government note that this reply characterizes
 24 the British initiative of 26 January as a "positive step". They
 25 welcome the assurance of the importance which the Argentine

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File number	Dept Private	Distribution F I GENERAL
Drafted by (Block capitals) P F Ricketts		
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2 Government attach to the definitive normalisation of relations
3 between the Argentine Republic and the United Kingdom, and the
4 Argentine Foreign Minister's acknowledgement that the six items
5 proposed by Britain for discussion in official talks merit
6 examination in depth.

7 4. The British Government note that the Argentine Foreign
8 Minister's message also looks forward to substantive negotiations
9 about sovereignty. The British Government have made clear that
10 sovereignty can not (not) be discussed, but that any discussions
11 about the progressive normalisation of relations should be
12 without prejudice to the positions of the United Kingdom and
13 Argentina respectively on the question of sovereignty over the
14 Falkland Island, South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands. The
15 British Government remain ready for talks with Argentine aimed
16 at normalising relations between the two countries. The aim of
17 such talks should be to establish a renewed climate of mutual
18 confidence in which UK-Argentine relations can be developed in
19 a practical and productive way. The question of sovereignty
20 must, however, be excluded from the talks.

21 5. Dr Caputo's message proposes the addition of three other
22 subjects to the agenda. The British Government's view is that
23 these are matters which fall within the United Kingdom's
24 responsibilities for the security of the Falkland Islands and
25 the well-being of their inhabitants. As such they do not
26 consider them to be subjects which it would be appropriate to
27 include in an agreed agenda for talks having the purpose
28 already described. The British Government hope that the Argentine
29 Government will on reflection agree that to open up a discussion
30 of the two countries' military dispositions in the region would
31 not be helpful to talks which, as was indicated in the British
32 proposals of 26 January, should deal with matters on which it is
33 realistic to expect early progress.

34 6. The British Government would welcome an early meeting

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2 between British and Argentine officials. They consider that talks
3 on the basis set out in the preceding paragraphs should be
4 conducted directly between representatives of Argentina and the
5 United Kingdom under the auspices of the Protecting Powers. In
6 the British view it would be appropriate to seek the good offices
7 of the Protecting Powers to convoke the initial meeting between
8 the two sides.

9 7. With regard to public presentation, the British Government
10 intend to confirm, in reply to questions, that this message has
11 been conveyed to the Argentine Government through the Swiss
12 Protecting Power. But the British Government consider that it
13 will continue to be in the interests of the two parties to keep
14 the details of these exchanges confidential. They have noted
15 that the Argentine Government have so far shared this view, and
16 hope they will continue to do so.

17 ENDS.

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