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10 DOWNING STREET

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From the Private Secretary

6 September 1989

MEETING WITH ARGENTINE FOREIGN MINISTER

Thank you for your letter of 5 September about the Argentine suggestion for a meeting between their Foreign Minister and the Foreign Secretary in the margins of the UN General Assembly. The Prime Minister agrees with the way the Foreign Secretary proposes to handle this, by having a brief courtesy exchange in the margins of the meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the Twelve and the Latin American Group of Eight.

(C.D. POWELL)

R.N. Peirce, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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DCAASZ
cpc

A handwritten signature in blue ink, possibly reading 'R.N. Peirce'.

cc/c
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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

5 September 1989

Dear Charles

Time limited

Meeting with Argentine Foreign Minister

Agree to this proposal? or seems to strike the right note. can 5/9 Yes - a good arrangement not

My letter of 25 August described the outcome of the recent talks with Argentina in New York. As you know, the Argentines felt they had taken considerable risks in laying sovereignty aside, and they are looking for a reciprocal gesture from us. During the talks they made it plain that they would welcome a meeting between the Foreign Secretary and the Argentine Foreign Minister, Dr Cavallo, in the margins of the UN General Assembly. Sir Crispin Tickell is strongly in favour of such a meeting; and we have no doubt that the Americans and other allies/partners would welcome it.

Notwithstanding this pressure, the Foreign Secretary thinks it would be odd to have a formal meeting, however brief, with the Foreign Minister of a country with which we do not have diplomatic relations. The official level discussions, though successful, were after all only "talks about talks". A formal meeting, however discreetly organised, would attract a great deal of media attention, which might complicate the negotiating process rather than help it. The Foreign Secretary is therefore disinclined to arrange such a meeting at this stage.

However, he is equally disinclined to sour improving relations or snub Dr Cavallo, who is the architect of President Menem's more realistic policy towards relations with Britain. He recognises that a meeting of some kind would help the climate for negotiations in Madrid in October.

The Foreign Secretary therefore proposes to decline a formal meeting but to agree to a brief courtesy exchange in the margins of the meeting on 27 September between the Foreign Ministers of the Twelve and the Latin American Group of Eight. He is in any case bound to encounter Dr Cavallo at this meeting. He proposes to instruct Sir Crispin Tickell to set this up with his Argentine opposite number. In answer to press enquiries, we would simply say that the Foreign Secretary expected to meet Dr Cavallo at the EC/Group of Eight meeting.

Yours ever

R N Peirce

(R N Peirce)
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq
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