

THE FALKLANDS DISPUTE BETWEEN PRESIDENT GALTIERI'S  
ACCESSION AND THE ARGENTINE INVASION: SECTION II:  
19 MARCH - 2 APRIL 1982

(Unless otherwise specified, all file references - folio numbers - are to ALW 040/325/121)

1. On 20 March, the Governor reported (folio 1) that the Commander of the BAS Base at Grytviken on South Georgia had reported the presence of an Argentine naval auxiliary in Leith harbour and that a sizeable party of men were ashore. The Governor had instructed the Base Commander to order the men and the ship to leave at once. It was generally assumed that the men were working for Davidoff, who had informed the Embassy in Buenos Aires on 10 March that he had hired 41 men to travel to South Georgia on the following day in order to dismantle the whaling stations in accordance with his contract with Christian Salvesen Ltd. Davidoff had previously called on the Embassy in February to discuss his plans. He had apologised for (and claimed ignorance of) the problems caused by the Irizar's visit to South Georgia in December. He was reminded of the need to comply with the appropriate immigration formalities. Davidoff had said that he was anxious not to create any difficulties and asked how to proceed. The Embassy asked the Governor to advise on this. On 12 March, the Governor commented that Davidoff was well aware of the need to report at Grytviken for immigration clearance before proceeding to Leith.

2. In reporting the landing of 19 March, the Governor said that Davidoff should now be instructed to leave South Georgia forthwith. If the party did not leave South Georgia, the Governor sought discretion for HMS Endurance to deploy there. He suspected that the Argentine Government were using Davidoff as a front to establish an Argentine presence on South Georgia.



3. Ministers were consulted by telephone over the weekend about this development and the FCO replied on 20 March to the Governor's message (folio 2), agreeing the instructions to the Base Commander and instructing HMA Buenos Aires to inform the Argentine MFA immediately and at the highest possible level, making clear that HMG regarded the landing as a serious incident. HMA Buenos Aires spoke accordingly to a senior official in the MFA, who claimed to be unaware of the circumstances. The Ambassador suggested in his reply (folio 4) that restraint should be used before a decision was taken on the deployment of HMS Endurance. Later on 20 March (folio 5) the FCO advised the Governor that HMS Endurance was being instructed to sail for South Georgia the next day if the party had not left by then. The Governor was asked to keep details of HMS Endurance's movements as confidential as possible in order to avoid escalating the incident. That night the office of LADE (the Argentine airline) in Port Stanley was broken into and vandalised (folio 27): this was subsequently played up in the Argentine press and by the MFA.

4. On 21 March, our Ambassador in Buenos Aires (folio 8) reported the official Argentine response to his approach: 'Without pronouncing actual apology (the Argentine official) expressed hope that significance of the affair would not be exaggerated'. The Argentines claimed that the landing was not 'official' and that no service personnel or military arms were involved. The Ambassador was told that the ship and the party would be leaving South Georgia that day. The FCO confirmed (folio 9) that HMS Endurance had now received instructions to proceed to South Georgia and asked HMA Buenos Aires to thank the Argentine Government for their quick response and to tell them 'we too have no wish to build up this issue unnecessarily'. The Governor was at the same time advised that if the ship and party were to seek belated authorisation this should be given.



5. On 22 March (folio 11), the FCO issued a press statement on the landing which described the facts as then available, including the information from the Argentine Government that the ship concerned had already left South Georgia but without referring to HMS Endurance's movements. Later on 22 March, the Base Commander reported (folio 18) that there were still some men ashore. The Governor 'strongly recommended that HMS Endurance be instructed to proceed to Leith to remove all Davidoff's men and that Davidoff be told he has forfeited the right to exercise his option to purchase scrap etc from Salvesen'. The Argentine MFA later confirmed (folio 22) that some men remained but that they did not include any personnel from the naval auxiliary.

4 6. On 23 March, Mr Luce made a statement in Parliament confirming that a small number of men remained ashore and that arrangements were being made to 'ensure their early departure'.  
5 The Captain of HMS Endurance sent a signal to the MOD recalling past indications of Argentine intentions in the Dependencies. 'I do not wish to exaggerate the situation but Argentina has been flexing her muscles over the sovereignty of the Dependencies ..... to use Davidoff as a scapegoat towards furthering aspirations was a good opportunity to test British reaction'. HMS Endurance was instructed (folio 21) to continue to South Georgia in order to remove the remaining Argentines. HMA Buenos Aires was asked (folio 24) to inform the MFA accordingly and to make clear that 'our intention is to conduct this operation correctly, peacefully and in as low a key as possible ..... our hope is that the political consequences, with careful handling on both sides, can continue to be minimised'. This telegram crossed with one from HMA Buenos Aires (folio 26) reporting a call on the Argentine Deputy Foreign Minister, who had urged that the incident should not be exaggerated. The Ambassador was 'confident that HMG would accept (the Argentines') assurances that no challenge at Government level was intended'. By this



time the incident was receiving headline treatment in the Argentine press, the tone varying from the factual to the hysterical (folio 28).

7. Later on 23 March (folio 29), HMA Buenos Aires reported that, as instructed, he had informed the Argentine Deputy Foreign Minister about our intention to use HMS Endurance. He was subsequently summoned by the Foreign Minister, who said 'he was surprised that HMG was proceeding so rapidly to such very grave action ..... and he must most solemnly warn that if HMG proceeds with the harsh measure of taking these men under arrest on a British warship to Port Stanley, those Argentines who are trying to deal with us over the Falklands in a moderate way will lose control of events. Our harsh action will produce a harsh response. He (Costa Mendez) could not predict what this would be, nor could he undertake to keep it within bounds'. The Foreign Minister agreed to look into the possibility of the Argentines removing the remaining party on South Georgia and urged that meanwhile HMS Endurance should take no action. He added that the incident only illustrated the need to get on with the sovereignty negotiations. The Ambassador added his own warning to the FCO that 'this spectacular reaction to a piece of trivial and low-level misbehaviour could well, in the current atmosphere, do lasting damage to the whole structure of our fruitful bilateral relations'. The reply (folio 30) said that the risk of escalation was recognised and that a further attempt should be made to resolve the problem 'in a politically uncontentious way'. Instructions were sent to HMS Endurance to weigh anchor in Grytviken harbour and not to proceed to Leith. HMA Buenos Aires was instructed to speak again to the Argentine Foreign Minister on the Secretary of State's personal instructions and to give the Argentines a last chance to remove the men themselves. The Argentines should be told that 'our main objective now must be to prevent this issue from developing political momentum. It is essential that we should not lose



sight of the overriding need to ensure that the right political climate exists for our mutual efforts to resolve the Falklands dispute peacefully through negotiations'. The Ambassador carried out these instructions on 23 March (folio 31) and they were welcomed by the Argentine Foreign Minister. In the Ambassador's view, Costa Mendez was trying to be helpful and sensible, but he was 'on a short rein with public opinion and the military. He is much concerned with the risk of subjecting his masters to loss of face'.

- 6 8. On 24 March, Lord Carrington minuted to the Prime Minister and OD colleagues on the general position on the Falklands dispute (referring to the South Georgia incident as an illustration of the delicacy of the situation as a whole). This had developed to a point where 'we may now face the prospect of an early confrontation with Argentina'. He rehearsed the positions adopted by both sides at the New York talks and the developments since. 'We want to continue negotiations, if only to avoid the consequences of their breakdown but it is politically impossible for us or the Islanders to do so against a background of threats'. The Secretary of State proposed that a message be sent to the Argentine Foreign Minister setting out the minimum terms on which HMG could continue negotiations on the Falklands; this message would be largely the same as that already agreed with Island Councillors. He stressed, however, that he could not be confident that it would be acceptable to the Argentines. 'We have therefore to recognise that negotiations may now be at an end and that the Argentines will turn to other forms of pressure'. Lord Carrington said that OD would need to meet soon to consider the full implications of the situation and the action that might need to be taken. However, in view of evidence that the Argentines might move swiftly to cut some or all of the essential services they provided to the Islands, he recommended that urgent work be put in hand in order to develop contingency plans. His minute included an annex on civil contingency planning and



stressed that new money would need to be found to pay for any new services. He proposed that the Defence Secretary might inform OD of military contingency planning.

7 9. Also on 24 March, Lord Carrington minuted the Defence  
Secretary (and OD colleagues) asking him to maintain HMS Endurance  
on station, at least for the time being. This was separate from  
8 the wider question of HMS Endurance's future, which again would  
need to be looked at by OD soon. The Prime Minister agreed on  
25 March that a message should be sent to the Argentine Foreign  
9 Minister on the lines proposed and that officials should be  
authorised to carry forward civil contingency plans on an urgent  
basis. The Minister of State at the MOD replied on 26 March to  
10 the minute to Mr Nott agreeing to the temporary retention of  
HMS Endurance on station but urging an early discussion by OD,  
if possible before Easter. The Prime Minister agreed on 28 March  
that the matter should be discussed 'at a very early meeting of OD'.

11 10. On 24 March, the British Defence Attache in Buenos Aires  
assessed the military threat to the Falklands. He advised that if  
HMS Endurance removed the men from South Georgia 'there would be  
not only the obvious risk of the operation itself meeting  
resistance, but also an increase in the threat to Port Stanley'.  
Our Ambassador saw Costa Mendez again (folio 41). The latter said  
that he was having great difficulty, particularly with Admiral  
Anaya, over the question of doing anything 'under the threat of  
force implied in the deployment of HMS Endurance'. He appeared  
at a loss to know how to proceed and asked for more time in which  
to take a decision. The FCO replied on 25 March (folio 44) 'we  
are in no doubt about the gravity of the present situation and we  
do not underestimate the clear risk of the Argentine response if  
Endurance moves to take the men from Leith to Port Stanley'.  
Lord Carrington urged that the Argentine Foreign Minister should  
persuade his colleagues to find a way out of the impasse and  
avoid a potentially dangerous confrontation. The Ambassador was  
asked to make clear that the Argentines would need to take action



quickly. He was also asked to advise on whether a personal message from the Prime Minister to President Galtieri and/or the despatch of a special representative to discuss the whole situation with the Argentine Government would help.

11. However, by the time the Ambassador was able to carry out these instructions (folio 49), there were already reports in the British press about the sending of HMS Endurance to South Georgia. He was told by Costa Mendez that there seemed now no way in which Argentina could remove the men without appearing to have responded to threat. Costa Mendez did not think that a special representative or a Prime Ministerial message would help at that stage but said that he would shortly be sending a message to Lord Carrington himself. There was also discussion on whether it was still possible even at that late stage for the British to authorise the Argentine presence retrospectively. In an article in La Prensa (folio 52), Iglesias Rouco urged the Government to 'stop dithering' and take firm, though unspecified, action.

12. On 25 March, HMA Buenos Aires was instructed (folio 55) to tell Costa Mendez that 'as an ultimate effort of goodwill on our part to avoid a situation which appeared to be heading for confrontation' we were prepared to allow the Argentines to proceed to Grytviken where suitable documentation would be issued to allow them to continue with their work. The US Embassy in London were also informed (folio 56) of our serious concern at the 'potentially explosive situation', including reports from secret sources which indicated that Argentine warships were preparing to resist any action by us. The Governor advised (folio 58) that authorisation for the Argentines to remain on South Georgia would go down very badly with the Islanders; but he accepted that in view of the worsening situation we had no option but to seek a compromise. In a call on South America Department on 25 March (folio 60), the Argentine Charge said that in his view the time had now passed when the Argentine Government could, without unacceptable loss of face, remove the men from



Leith themselves. The Foreign Minister's options 'would now be very narrow'. Stressing that he was speaking personally, Molteni thought that it would be helpful if we could send our response to the Argentine proposal for a permanent negotiation commission as soon as possible. He was told that we had hoped to be able to give our considered reply on the negotiating commission in the near future but that it was unlikely to be possible in present circumstances.

13. On 26 March, the department submitted a situation report (folio 99). It identified the possible options as:

- (i) to order HMS Endurance to remove the men to Port Stanley;
- (ii) to put the men on board HMS Endurance while awaiting a transshipment to an Argentine vessel;
- (iii) to leave HMS Endurance at Grytviken, but prepare a task force to support it;
- (iv) to accept that HMS Endurance should not be used because of the military risks;
- (v) to seek American good offices to mediate.

The paper saw difficulties with each of these options but recommended that a message should be sent to Mr Haig if the awaited response from Costa Mendez was negative.

12 14. Later on 26 March, HMA Buenos Aires was informed (folio 69) that the Argentine President wished to discuss the matter with the rest of the Junta and that a reply to our proposal of 25 March would thus be delayed.

15. On 26 March, the MOD also circulated their outline military contingency plans in the event of a use of force by Argentina. This was a general paper, first prepared in the summer of 1981: it did not deal specifically with the incident on South Georgia. The covering note commented that 'our scope for effective military action in response to whatever the Argentines may do is extremely limited ..... almost anything we could do would be too late and/or extremely expensive'.



16. In the continued absence of an Argentine response, HMA Buenos Aires was asked on 27 March (folio 73) to supply an immediate assessment of the Argentine intentions. The Ambassador replied (folio 74) that he had the growing impression that Costa Mendez had been 'less than honest' and that the Argentines had been 'playing us along'. After the Junta meeting of 26 March, Costa Mendez had gone straight to the MFA press room to announce that a firm decision had been taken to give the men on South Georgia 'all necessary diplomatic protection ..... nor is this diplomatic only, since there is also a navy ship in the area to provide any necessary protection'. The Ambassador subsequently spoke to the Deputy Foreign Minister (folio 75), who could only say that following the Junta meeting on 26 March 'there were revised instructions to the Minister of Foreign Affairs'. He promised a message from Costa Mendez to the Secretary of State. He thought that the message would contain a constructive proposal. In a subsequent telegram (folio 77), the Ambassador said that whatever was in the message, it was unlikely to meet our minimum requirements. The Naval Attache reported separately that the Argentines could have a dominating naval presence in the area within a few days. The issue remained the main news in the Argentine press (folio 78).

17. On 28 March, Costa Mendez sent his promised message to Lord Carrington (folio 81). It suggested that HMG were making too much fuss about a perfectly normal commercial contract on territory which was considered by the Argentines to be theirs. 'The British Government has reacted in terms which constitute a virtual ultimatum backed by the threat of military action in the form of the despatch of the naval warship Endurance'. The comments published in the British press had had an 'aggravating effect'. The Argentine Government could only adopt 'those measures which prudence and its rights demand. In this context the Argentine workers in South Georgia must remain there'. The Foreign Minister went on to draw a direct link between the South



Georgia incident and the overall sovereignty dispute. He accused HMG of adopting a negative attitude throughout many years of negotiations in which Argentina 'has given adequate evidence of its wish to resolve the dispute by peaceful means ..... to resolve the present situation I considered it necessary that Your Excellency's Government should display, as does the Argentine Government, the political will to negotiate not only the current problem which concerns us, but also the sovereignty dispute'. Our Ambassador made clear to Costa Mendez (folio 80) that this message did not propose any constructive way of proceeding. In his reporting telegram (folio 82), the Ambassador feared 'we must conclude that the Argentines intend no move to resolve the dispute but rather to let matters ride while they build up their naval strength in the area and we remain in the dilemma of either taking or not taking action ourselves'.

18. In the light of this Argentine response, Lord Carrington sent later on 28 March a message (folio 85) to the US Secretary of State which rehearsed the history of the South Georgia incident and asked for US intervention.

19. On 29 March, following consultation between FCO and MOD Ministers, HMS Spartan (a nuclear-powered submarine - SSN) was instructed to sail to the South Atlantic and a second SSN was prepared for sailing.

20. In the Secretary of State's absence in Brussels, the situation was discussed by Mr Luce with officials (folio 87) on 29 March. It was considered premature to propose a resumption of the broader Falklands negotiations or to send a special emissary to Buenos Aires. It was agreed to suggest to the Secretary of State that a reply to Costa Mendez should propose that the Argentine party should contact Grytviken to 'regularise their position' (ie that they would no longer have physically to leave Leith to do this). If this were done we would agree to reconvene the broader sovereignty talks. In the meantime, both



sides would have to agree to avoid any naval action of a provocative nature. Drafts of the suggested message to Costa Mendez and a further message to Mr Haig were sent to the Secretary of State in Brussels for comment (folios 88 and 89) along with a proposed text of a parliamentary statement for Lord Carrington to make on 30 March (folio 91). Following discussion with the Secretary of State's party by telephone, a revised draft message to Costa Mendez was sent to Brussels for consideration (folio 94). It stressed the urgent need to resolve the problem and proposed that Mr Luce should travel to meet the Argentine Foreign Minister or a representative in a third country as soon as possible. The Minister would take with him 'constructive proposals' to find a way out of the impasse. In a telegram commenting on this draft (folio 93), Mr Luce expressed reservations about the proposal that an emissary should be sent at that stage. It was clear that the MFA were no longer in control; any emissary would have to have access to the Junta and to do this he would have to go to Buenos Aires - which would be presentationally very unhelpful.

- 13 21. Also on 29 March, the Chief Secretary replied to Lord Carrington's minute about civil contingency planning to say that he could not agree that financial provision for this should be found from the Contingency Reserve. If HMS Endurance were maintained in service the finance would also have to be found from existing programmes: no new money would be available.
22. Later on 29 March, HMA Washington called on Deputy Secretary Stoessel at the State Department (folio 97) who said that Haig was concerned about the dispute. 'He hoped that there would be restraint on both sides and insisted that the US would not take sides'. Sir N Henderson replied that the Americans 'could surely not be neutral in a case of illegal occupation of sovereign British territory'. Stoessel said the US were willing to use their good offices to bring about a solution to this particular



incident although they did not feel they had any role on the underlying Falklands dispute.

23. Following a meeting held with the Secretary of State on his return from Brussels on 30 March (folio 104), the proposed message to Costa Mendez was redrafted to propose the despatch of a senior official instead of Mr Luce as an emissary to Buenos Aires. The message was sent that afternoon (folio 109).

14 Statements were made on the situation in both Houses of Parliament. Lord Carrington also called in the US Charge (folio 107) and made clear his concern at the US attitude as reported by Sir N Henderson. We could not accept that we were being put on the same footing as the Argentines. Lord Carrington pointed out that we had done much to support the United States over the past year or so and now we were for the first time asking for help from the US.

24. The Naval Attache in Buenos Aires reported (folio 106) that several Argentine warships had put to sea, some specifically ordered to South Georgia. The Argentine press referred to a routine training exercise but one paper said that missiles had hurriedly been put on board at least one ship.

25. HMA Buenos Aires later reported on a meeting between his American colleague and Costa Mendez (folio 112). The latter had apparently made it clear that American good offices 'while welcomed on the underlying dispute were not required on the current incident ..... The solution of the problem of the incident could be found in starting without delay negotiation of the main dispute'. Given this tough response, HMA Buenos Aires questioned whether it was prudent to deliver the message he had been asked to give to Costa Mendez for fear that the Argentines should think that 'they have us on the run not only on this incident but over conceding sovereignty'. He advised that it would be better to let the Argentines stew for a day or two. He also recalled that major demonstrations were planned by the trade unions against the Government's economic measures for later that day.



26. After making his statement in the House of Lords, the Secretary of State had left for Tel Aviv. Two reports from secret sources on Argentine intentions were relayed to him (folio 113). One quoted Anaya as saying that while the South Georgia incident had not been created by the Argentine Government it had come at a 'wonderful time' providing Argentina with a means of 'pressing forward on its sovereignty claim and consolidating its own public opinion behind a military regime'. The other quoted naval sources as saying that the Argentine Government could take military action against the Falklands in April not through a complete invasion but by occupying one of the outlying islands of the Falklands archipelago. Mr Luce's assessment of these reports was that:

- (i) Provided we took no further action against the men on South Georgia, the Argentines would probably take no further action themselves 'but the Argentine Navy clearly has the bit between its teeth and is looking for an excuse to take wider military action';
- (ii) It must now be regarded as highly improbable that the Argentine Government would be prepared to accept any compromise on the regularisation of the work force on South Georgia.

Independent Television News that night carried a report that a nuclear-powered submarine had left for the Falkland Islands and that a second would follow shortly. HMA Buenos Aires (folio 114) was asked what the likely reaction would be in Argentina. He replied (folio 116) that it could 'conceivably lead to precipitate violent action', but he thought it more likely that it would give the Argentines occasion to pause. 'Current arrogance is a by-product of belief that we are powerless'.

27. On 31 March, the FCO replied (folio 119) to HMA Buenos Aires' suggestion that we delay passing the message to Costa Mendez and (folio 118) that any emissary should be a senior figure who was neither a Minister nor an official. The Ambassador was asked to deliver to Costa Mendez the message proposed earlier in the week. 'We think it important that we launch our diplomatic initiative without further delay even if the Argentine response to this and



the despatch of our emissary is likely to be less speedy (indeed there will be some advantage in not hastening unduly)'.  
Following further secret reports that an Argentine invasion might be imminent, the Prime Minister communicated with

15 President Reagan by 'hot Line' and asked him to intervene. The  
16 Governor was informed that an invasion force could be assembled  
17 and in position within two or three days. HMA Buenos Aires  
reported that he had delivered Lord Carrington's message to  
Costa Mendez. Costa Mendez had said that he would give no  
immediate reaction but would communicate first with the President.  
He did, however, say 'This was not quite the message he had  
hoped for'. He agreed there was a need to avoid confrontation,  
but said that press reports of the movement of warships did not  
encourage hope for an early solution.

18 28. HMA Buenos Aires was summoned to Costa Mendez on 1 April.  
Commenting on the likely Argentine response, he judged that he  
would probably be told that the British message was inadequate  
and be given an ultimatum. 'It is however difficult to see how  
international justification for armed attack could be stage-  
19 managed.' Costa Mendez's promised reply said: 'The Argentine  
Government regarded the matter of South Georgia as closed and  
saw no purpose in an emissary coming unless this were to discuss  
the transfer of sovereignty'.

20 29. Costa Mendez later that day confirmed in writing that  
Argentina considered the South Georgia incident closed, that an  
emissary would only be accepted if his task were to negotiate  
the modalities of a transfer of sovereignty over the Falklands  
and Dependencies, and that the 'unusual British naval deployment'  
could only be interpreted as an 'unacceptable threat of the use  
of military force'. In a long telegram summarising press reports,  
21 the Embassy indicated that most of the Argentine Navy was  
at sea. Most papers talked of a solution 'by diplomatic or other  
means' within 48 hours.



22 30. The US Ambassador had previously spoken to Costa Mendez,  
who was non-committal. He subsequently called on President  
23 Galtieri with a message from Mr Haig, with President Reagan's  
Embassy in Washington that they assumed the Argentines were  
24 planning to go through with their military operation. President  
25 Reagan would therefore telephone Galtieri personally to insist  
that no action be taken. At first Galtieri refused to take the  
call. When they eventually spoke, Galtieri said that he  
appreciated the American concern but if the UK did not agree  
immediately 'to recognise Argentine sovereignty over the whole  
of the Falklands ..... they would take whatever action was  
necessary ..... Argentina considered that it had full freedom  
to use force'. The Governor was informed that an Argentine task  
force would gather off the Islands in the morning of 2 April.

26 31. Action at the UN began on 31 March, when it was learned  
that the Argentine representative was expecting instructions to  
take the South Georgia question to the Security Council. In  
the event he did not do so that day. Sir A Parsons first  
advised that while we should ordinarily resist action in the  
Security Council wherever possible, if we had reason to believe  
that the Argentines were seriously planning military action  
against the Falklands we should take the initiative in convening  
the Security Council. In his view, action in the Council before  
the invasion could have a useful deterrent effect on the  
Argentines. If a resolution were adopted or a presidential  
statement made calling upon both parties to resume negotiations,  
it would be very difficult for the Argentines to justify the use  
of force. He gave this advice fully aware of the danger of any  
resolution being widened to prejudice the sovereignty question.  
27 In a subsequent telegram he emphasised that it would be unwise  
of us to approach the Council except to pre-empt a threat of an  
invasion of the Falkland Islands themselves; there could be no  
hope of success if we merely referred the South Georgia incident.



He also emphasised that we would need absolutely convincing evidence of a genuine threat before we went to the Council.

28 32. On 1 April, the UN Secretary General (at Sir A Parsons's  
confidential request) summoned the Argentine and British  
representatives separately and urged that the differences  
between the two countries should be settled through diplomatic  
channels. Sr Perez de Cuellar commented to Sir A Parsons that  
if the Argentines were contemplating military action this would  
be partly to divert attention from their internal difficulties  
and from the mess that they had got themselves into with Chile  
29 over the Beagle Channel. He informed the press of the action  
he had taken. (Later that day the Argentine Ambassador  
30 addressed a Note to the President of the Security Council. He  
claimed that 'the conduct of the British Government has provoked  
the incidents I have described, combined with a military presence  
which is unjustified and against the international principles of  
international peace and security, constitute the culmination of  
a systematic policy of the United Kingdom aimed at maintaining  
a position of total rejection of the sovereignty of my country  
over the Falklands, South Georgia and South Sandwich'.

31 33. The Security Council later met in emergency session at our  
32 request. In his statement Sir A Parsons rejected the claims in  
the Argentine note, rehearsed in detail the history of events  
since 19 March and made it plain where, in the British view,  
responsibility lay for the present situation. The Security  
Council meeting ended that night with an appeal by the President  
33 of the Security Council to both Governments to exercise the  
'utmost restraint at this time and in particular to refrain from  
the use or threat of force ..... and continue the search for a  
34 diplomatic solution'. Sir A Parsons responded positively to this  
but the Argentine Ambassador said nothing. In Sir A Parsons's  
35 view we had got as much out of the UN as we could have hoped for.  
There had been in all two appeals by the Secretary General and



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one from the President of the Security Council. The sympathy of the majority of the Council was clearly with the UK and the Argentines were wrong-footed. However, the Argentine Ambassador's statement contained a clear attempt to justify the use of force and his failure to respond to the appeal of the President of the Security Council boded ill for our hopes of preventing the use of force. The Security Council was next convened after the Argentine invasion, which began on the early morning of 2 April.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE  
August 1982