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BRIEFING BY
THE HONORABLE ALEXANDER M. HAIG, JR.
SECRETARY OF STATE
BEFORE
KEY HOUSE LEADERSHIP and HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
ROOM 2172
RAYBURN BUILDING, WASHINGTON, D.C.

CHAIRMAN ZABLOCKI: This is an informal, closed meeting. Those who are not privileged to be here --

Mr. Secretary.

SECRETARY HAIG: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thought it would be helpful to bring the members here present up to date on the Falklands (Malvinas) crisis. I think you that from the outset the issue developed as somewhat of a surprise, certainly here in Washington, but equally so in London, although perhaps there should not have.

There have been some 17 years of negotiation on this subject between Britain and Argentina. The last meeting was held in January. That meeting apparently broke up with tremendous frustration on the Argentine side, and perhaps a lack of sensitivity on the British side. At least, they didn't appear to appreciate the level of frustration that the Argentines insisted to me that they registered. As you know, that cost the former Foreign Secretary his job; and it cost him his job apparently because the feeling was the Foreign Office had not kept the Prime Minister appropriately apprised of the seriousness of the situation, and they were caught by surprise.

As you know, on the 2nd of April, the Argentine forces seized the Falklands. It was essentially a navy show run by the Chief of Naval Operations and designated to a task force commander who was a navy admiral. It was done apparently with a great deal of skill, a great deal of discipline, and a great deal of thorough and professional prior planning because there were no British casualties, although the Argentine forces did suffer casualties. They informed me -- and the British have not challenged that fact -- that they retrained their fire while accepting some British fire.

The next, almost immediate, consequence of the invasion and seizure was the U.N. deliberations and the U.N. Resolution 502. That Resolution called for the cessation of hostilities, the withdrawal of the Argentine forces from the Islands, and a political solution to the problem. They are the three key elements of the U.N. Resolution.

The United States was active in supporting that resolution, despite some press speculation to the contrary. It was very much in line with what the British Government wanted. Strangely enough, it lacked any reference to self-determination in the political solution of area, which was probably an oversight at the moment, and which has been an oversight that has resulted in some difficult consequences in the later talks. It has been a longstanding view of the British that self-determination was a key aspect of the future of the Islands.

I think it is also important, in view of a lot of press speculation, that it be understood that from the very moment of the crisis, the President, the Department of State, Defense and CIA considered this an extremely serious situation, and not a light comic opera, as some of the first assessments would have suggested.

One: Did we consider it so serious? Well, we considered it serious first and foremost because it involved the first real challenge, short of the Polish situation -- and there were ambiguities of the Polish situation -- where this Administration had been challenged with change as a result of the illegal utilization of armed forces. As you know, we have attempted, in the light of the past decade, to place peaceful change by rule of law as the centerpiece of our foreign policy. This is a matter of deep principle, and if one looks back over the last decade since the Vietnam conflict, what we have been faced with is the hemorrhaging of just such situations, and so it was a matter of deep principle.

Secondly, we also recognized it was a matter of fundamental importance in terms of the longstanding, historic, special relationship between the United States and Great Britain. Here we have been since the war of 1812, basically aligned. We fought together in two wars in this century, and we felt it was vitally important that we play an active role, and be perceived to be playing an active role.

That overlapped very clearly into another aspect of the crisis, and that was the current state of play in NATO, where there are deep economic and some strategic questions which have evolved over the years, and which are disruptive to the normal level of consultation and mutual confidence. They came to a head, of course, the first time in Afghanistan; we had similar problems in Poland, you'll recall. That made the issue itself both important and perhaps contributed to some of the unusual alacrity in the alignment of the EC-9 along with Great Britain to take sanctions

against Argentine. I think we have been around that course twice in two crises, so therefore it moved very rapidly on this occasion, besides the fact that it is sometimes easier to brutalize the little guy. There was some of that, of course. Then, we had a fundamental NATO interest here as well.

Thirdly, we had a vitally important hemispheric interest. We've been working for 16 months to move ourselves from an adversarial position that has evolved over recent years with the OAS, to one of greater empathy and conversion of policies and approaches. We have done that with great success, I may add. As recently as the Saint Lucia Conference of the OAS, we had 21 votes that converged with our own on the question of El Salvador in the elections, support for that electoral process, and expressions of concern about the totalitarian trends in Nicaragua.

It was very clear that were we to allow that crisis to be dealt with exclusively in the OAS, that it would rupture hemispheric solidarity along Spanish-speaking/English-speaking lines. There were some of those manifestations in the recent deliberations; but our activity before that consideration by the OAS, I think, was extremely helpful in still keeping a lid on that kind of a self-debilitating fracturing of hemispheric unity.

Just as clearly, we considered the United Nations as the body to deal with this question, but we recognized that just as it would have been difficult in the OAS, had it gone to the United Nations it would have quickly transferred itself into the historic animosity between North and South, in colonialist-imperialist, emotional-ridden consequences of such a debate. And it may yet find itself in such a situation.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly of all, it was very clear that if the United States did not move promptly at a very high level to be seen to be involved and to seize the initiative in our efforts to be involved, that there would be antries made by both Cuba and the Soviet Union into the controversy. I want you gentlemen to know that the day I arrived in Buenos Aires, after an absence of a year and a half, the Cuban Ambassador returned to Buenos Aires with a planeload full of highly sophisticated, high-level personnel. We learned about this because they had to make a forced landing in Brazil on its way, and they got a chance to look at the manifests. They went in immediately to President Galtieri, and he told me so in his own words,

they offered him everything -- military support, political support, and everything he needed. And they certainly were speaking in behalf of themselves and the Soviet Union. Similarly, the Soviet Ambassador made approaches to the Argentine Government, offering intelligence and support. The Argentines told us that very freely.

I think it is also important to recognize, in the light of some of the press speculation I have seen, that we did not inject ourselves into this process. We had personal requests, urgent requests, from the heads of government of both parties, from Mrs. Thatcher and from President Galtieri. And both asked that I, personally, become engaged. So if anyone is speculating that there was anybody out here running around, looking for shuttle diplomacy opportunities, they're wrong, mischievous, and misinformed.

I think it is awfully important to understand how this thing has played out along the way. We went first to London, then to Buenos Aires, and then again to Buenos Aires, as you know. We had extensive discussions at the highest level. In Great Britain it was relatively easy because the government is structured and organized pluralistically and democratically. The Cabinet sits down with the Prime Minister, and business is done.

In Argentina some say, "We enjoy pluralism." Well, I see pluralism in the extreme there because there is no one who can make a decision. There are variously from 20 to 40 people who can cast a veto on any decision that is made. And so instead of a consensus of what you would call a majority view, it is the lowest common denominator of the most extreme view that prevails. We have a President, who is both President of the nation, as distinct from the republic, who is also Chief of Staff of the Army -- and that is the first time that has ever occurred; it's unique; he wears two hats. That's "up for grabs" here next month when it will be reconsidered. And it is the Army which has, historically, been in control of the government, that has furnished Presidents regularly. In this case, he held his hat as Chief of Staff of the Army so he is not only President, but manager of the ground forces. He is also, however, very much subject to the veto of his corps commanders. Any decision he makes as Chief of Staff of the Army must be coordinated with the corps commanders and even the division commanders.

Beyond that, you have the Junta; he's being the Army member, as President; the Navy Chief of Staff, and the Air Force Chief of Staff. The Navy in Argentina is unique.

It is Castillian in character. It's a test-tube Navy that has been out of the mainstream of politics, that is zealous, very zealous. It is competent, professionally; is highly sensitive of the fact that it has never enjoyed the power of the Army, and who ran this show, and therefore, are the most rigid advocates of not giving up the gains that have been achieved. The Air Force is the less important, unfortunately, because it is the more moderate element in the Junta.

That is our problem. And the simple evolution of the discussions was that when you would get an agreement from either the Foreign Minister or even the President, they would then convene this huge potpourri of the Junta, and then check with the corps commanders. And the next morning, what you had gotten an agreement on was totally reversed, withdrawn, and hardened up. That is what we went through, cycle after cycle.

I must say that the British Government, from the outset, has been reasonable and easy to deal with. Their position has been that sovereignty is not a critical issue. What is a critical issue is that the will of the population, self-determination is the key issue. And if the population decides to go with Argentina, so be it; if they decide to stay aligned with Britain or seek independence, so be it. The British are prepared to accept that.

If one were looking for criticism, it would be that while that principle is very laudible and supportable, they have created conditions on the Islands which make free choice by the population less than balanced. It's a cacoon, both by the choice of the population, who are the unique breed of sheepherder from the Scottish moors, who have been there for years, who like their solitude and their sheep. The only thing they apparently miss is women, and I guess they take care of that by inter-family difficulties and God help the sheep. (Laughter)

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But, be that as it may, it's clear that the Argentines cannot get in. They're excluded. They're excluded in commercial enterprise, they're excluded in property ownership, they're excluded in joining the so-called Falkland Island Company which is really the controlling interest on the island and it probably involves 400 of the so-called 1800 sheepherders.

It also owns much of the land and leases it out to the landholders. It's in a conglomerate holding company arrangement, the change of which requires apparently Parliamentary action.

So in that sense, one might say that the Argentine Government adds up to frustration that they always fear self-determination because they felt it was a self-fulfilling prophecy and continued the land of the Brits.

On the Argentine side, despite all of our effort to create an evolutionary, honorable, trending away from existing relationship, which the British has been willing to accept, the Argentines have insisted bedrock, fundamental a priori relinquishment of sovereignty, either in the near term through de facto arrangement or as the precondition for negotiation, that the only negotiations that would be acceptable to them would be those that would leave to a transfer of property to Argentina.

So it's not just a question of decolonialization; it's a question of recolonialization on top of decolonialization.

We have insisted throughout the discussions that that would not be acceptable as a matter of principle, and we've been steadily and consistently rebuffed.

As a result of these differences, we put together what we thought on the U.S. side would be a fair, evolutionary adjustment for political solution. It involved cessation of hostilities, conditions for the withdrawal and separation of forces, an interim management arrangement on the island in which we would participate, and immediate negotiations with a date certain for conclusion but without prejudging what the results of this negotiation should be.

We gave that at 0400 in the morning the day before yesterday to both governments. We urged both governments to reply urgently, not because of wishing to convey an ultimatum to those governments, but, most importantly, to suggest

to them that convergent of forces were such that we were out of time.

We did not get our reply from the Argentine Government. The British Government did not really give us a reply either, although we knew that they were prepared to probably accept reluctantly what we had put together, and today for the first time we received our reply.

I'm going to hold up on telling you what that reply was, but I want to suggest to you that the situation does not look good.

MR. JACK KEMP: Reply from whom?

SECRETARY HAIG: From Argentina. I ask you to not discuss this fact with anyone. It's too dangerous. Lives could be involved. They may be indeed involved in any event. I discussed the situation today with the President, and we will clearly have to deal with it in the immediate future, perhaps as early as tomorrow morning.

The force dispositions are such that, as you know, tomorrow morning the British apply an air restricted zone on top of the maritime restricted zone that they applied earlier, and they will have forces in position to enforce it.

So as early as tomorrow you could see some air action or perhaps some surface action in that restricted zone.

We want to maintain a position here that will enable us, regardless of what happens in the days and hours ahead, to continue to play a constructive role. Why? There is simply no one else to do it. The United Nations will go into a meeting, this North-South veto-able configuration. The OAS will become a highly charged Spanish-speaking, English-speaking problem.

That's why we have done our very best to maintain within the framework of our existing relationships with both governments, and I hope you understand that's not neutral. And when people say we've had an even-handed relationship, that's not true. We've had extensive exchanges with Great Britain, because on ongoing obligations and commitments, and those who think that we are not helping Britain within those frameworks are going to be proven to be sadly mistaken.

I alert you to be careful what you say there, because you'll have egg on your face when the facts all come out. We have tried to avoid an extension of those, not because we just want to but because the British want us to. They have wanted us to maintain the position we've been maintaining, and let me assure you of that.

I said that to the Senate last night, and one skeptic immediately called the British Ambassador and asked him if it was true, and he said, "You're damn right."

So there hasn't been any irresponsible ignoring of obligations and responsibilities of traditional friends. On the other hand, the British need our help, they want us to be able to play the role we've been playing, and they want us to continue to be able to play that role. We're not, unfortunately, going to be able to be as even-handed in the light of current Argentine attitudes.

I welcome your questions.

CHAIRMAN ZABLOCKI: Mr. Bingham?

MR. BINGHAM: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Two questions, Mr. Secretary, if I may. Has any thought been given to trying to defuse and defer the ultimate decision on the sovereignty question by referring it to the ICJ?

SECRETARY HAIG: Every conceivable historic and a few novel ideas have been put forth. Everything from the lease-back proposals to trusteeship to even what you call minority relationship, internal sovereignty, external sovereignty being held differently -- and it's been an unfortunate fact of life that the Argentine Government -- and it's probably a result of their own internal situation -- is unable to accept any proposal that does not either clearly state that sovereignty has been transferred or that contains practical arrangements which insure that transfer has taken place.

They have rejected all such proposals. They've rejected the leasing arrangement which the British would find very difficult to pursue now because that was a de facto relinquishment of sovereignty in the first instance. But the British have not been hung up on any kind of arrangement that would not abuse the rights of the populace.

MR. BINGHAM: Would the announcement that the United States favored or that perhaps the British and the

United States would favor the referral of the sovereignty issue apart from other issues -- the sovereignty issue alone -- to the World Court as an issue which it could deal with in its good time and thus defer that issue?

Would that be a helpful thing in terms of the public position of the British and of the United States?

SECRETARY HAIG: It wouldn't be hurtful, but it would be rejected out of hand by the Argentines. I have talked adjudication by the World Court, by the U.N., or by a special commission. It was rejected all.

CHAIRMAN ZABLOCKI: Mr. Dickinson?

MR. DICKINSON: Thank you, Mr. Secretary, for coming over and discussing with the Armed Services Committee. I went down and visited with Galtieri, oh, about a few months ago (inaudible).

But I wonder if you might -- there has been a great deal of speculation in the press as to whether or not there is oil there and this is what is the motivating factor that has caused Argentina at this time to make the move, and what could you tell us about that? Is that really a part of this equation or formula?

SECRETARY HAIG: Not at all, and strangely enough, there were a lot of rumors that that's what it was all about in the first days of the crisis. And both governments discount that completely in a very credible way, and both governments are willing to share, to jointly hold those resources and to share the consequences of them. In no way is that the issue.

The issue is national honor, 150 years of Argentine insistence that sovereignty belonged to them, and 150 years of British belief that they had the sovereignty and under the process of decolonialization, it must be in accordance with self-determination.

MR. DICKINSON: Well, something had to trigger this at this particular time. Was it domestic strife that Galtieri was experiencing at home?

SECRETARY HAIG: Absolutely.

MR. KEMP: Is it helping him or hurting him right now? Domestically.

SECRETARY HAIG: It's going to finish him. He will not survive this.

MEMBER: Regardless of how it goes.

SECRETARY HAIG: Regardless.

MEMBER: Is that right?

SECRETARY HAIG: Yes. The people of Argentina do not want conflict. Those demonstrations you saw, these were trumped up government demonstrations where they went out and got the Peronistas, brought them in by trains, and put them in the square. Within 24 hours you couldn't find any of that sentiment.

I made a very purposeful, regular visit to Mass, and I was just mobbed in Church and outside of Church by people begging me to do what we could to have peace.

MR. DICKINSON: Somehow that doesn't reach the press, does it?

SECRETARY HAIG: No. Of course not.

CHAIRMAN ZABLOCKI: Mr. Gilman?

MR. GILMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Secretary, I know that all of our colleagues join in commending you for your outstanding efforts in what you're trying to do, and some of the concerns that we've had were, where do we stand with the Rio Treaty if we have to choose up sides?

SECRETARY HAIG: We've made the point, and we made it this past week in the brief what has been described as blunt intervention that I made, that aggression has already occurred and it has occurred within the membership of the Treaty, and the Treaty does not visualize collective action against such activity. So we claim that it is not relevant to this issue.

MR. GILMAN: Along that line, what about the other Latin American countries? Will they be drawn in if there is a conflict?

SECRETARY HAIG: This is the great problem. Every one of these -- well, not every one -- many of them have similar problems of their own: Venezuela with Guiana, Chile

with Argentina again, the Panamanian case with us. There are a host of these things. Belize and Guatemala. So while they rally vigorously to external interventionism in the hemisphere and the Latino macho against that, they also very deep down do not want Argentina's aggression to be rewarded.

They understand what it means to them. The Brazilians are very clear about this. The Colombians are very clear about it. There are others like Peru and Venezuela with the Guiana case that have been somewhat less thoughtful. But Chile does not want this to succeed, because the Beagle Channel will be the next. And the history and legacy of Argentina worries me.

CHAIRMAN ZABLOCKI: Mr. Rosenthal.

MR. ROSENTHAL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Secretary, I'm interested in your prognosis of events, and I know that's difficult, but do you think that an initial physical contact will cause either of these countries to change their position? Somewhere down the line someone's going to change. How do you see that developing?

SECRETARY HAIG: It's very difficult to say. I think one would say that the first British experience on South Georgia convinced them that they were light years more competent than the Argentine forces. They had better equipment, better communications, better intelligence, and were able to function with greater efficiency.

That could be somewhat self-deluding in the context of the Falklands situation where they've got 6000 to 8000 troops entrenched, well equipped, well armed, with a land-based air capability which, while it's at the far end of its range, it's still nonetheless not insignificant.

Also, they have submarines. They lost one and they've scavenged the other one, but they've got two good diesels functioning now. There's some evidence that they may even be in that restricted area already. We feel one is and probably the second.

So if the British lost a large capital ship, I think there would be great difficulty at home for Mrs. Thatcher. If the Argentines take a sudden pasting, if their navy would sortie out, it will get a pasting and that might topple that government. That government might topple anyway, once fighting starts.

CHAIRMAN ZABLOCKI: Mr. Kemp signals he has to leave, so could we take him out of order?

MR. KEMP: I apologize. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Secretary, I think the American people are smart enough to know that your effort to work out a mediation role for this country and the role of the President, as you have played it, is very much supported, and despite a little bit of the carping, I appreciate what you've done, and you're to be commended.

Secondly, can you discuss the military situation in terms of what Ben Rosenthal talked about, how you see this thing evolving and what political impact that might have on the Thatcher Government which many of us are equally, if not more, concerned. I mean, I know I didn't put it right, but I'm worried about that government, and the U.K. perspective of what a military -- I don't know if you can characterize it as a defeat, but, as you say, those people are dug in, they're well armed, and it's going to cause bloodshed, and what's going to happen in Britain when British boys start to lose their lives? And what is the tenuousness of the Thatcher regime on this issue?

SECRETARY HAIG: We haven't asked the British to share with us their strategy, and, frankly, I think it would be the wrong thing to do. They probably wouldn't do it anyway if we asked. But our assessment is that the way this thing will evolve is that as of now they have their two carriers in position, they have a large surface capability in position -- destroyers and missile ships -- and that as that air embargo or that air cordon begins tomorrow and joins with the surface, the island has only been resupplied, except by a few light freighters -- very light, fast-running freighters have apparently gotten in with some supplies -- but the bulk of it's been by air, and they've had to keep that air breach going. They are not a lot of supplies on the island.

So that starting tomorrow, that 10,000 or 8,000-man force -- the Argentines say it's 10 and our people say it's 6 to 8 -- will begin to live off what it has. Also, the British are capable of launching shore bombardment from their destroyers, either to take out that airfield or to start to attrit those dug-in forces. They have rockets, they have conventional artillery on those vessels, and they can come in at night and have at it because there's no night-capable radar on the island.

Beyond that, the British have moved Vulcans to the Ascension Islands and with aerial refueling, they could drop -- each plane can carry 4,000 pounds of ordnance -- they've been reconfigured from nuclear role to conventional -- and I would say the British could do a hell of a job over time to those forces.

In addition to that, they may have and certainly probably will land their special action teams on the island where they can harass and run all around these people because they are so well communicated and so well disciplined and so well trained, and start to erode the morale.

There are a lot of sheep to eat -- 400,000 -- on that island, but Argentines hate sheep.

MEMBER: For any reason.

SECRETARY HAIG: For any reason.

(Laughter)

SECRETARY HAIG: Now I'm not sure of that.

(Laughter)

MEMBER: You better be careful.

SECRETARY HAIG: In any event, I think the British have some reason for a degree of confidence. The great danger would be a submarine hit or a full-blown Kamikaze type attack from land-based air, in which a major combatant was sunk and there were high casualties. Then you're going to find a very different internal environment in Britain. And already you notice the Labor Party and the SPD -- Owen has begun to crack a little. They started yesterday. So it's not a good situation.

MR. KEMP: Keep up the good work.

CHAIRMAN ZABLOCK: Mr. Mica?

MR. MICA: Mr. Secretary, I, too, join my colleagues in commending you for trying to find a peaceful solution, but I'm interested in two or three questions I'll run together.

Have you been disinvented from Argentina?

SECRETARY HAIG: No. I have not been.

MR. MICA: And what is the potential? You mention the Cuban willingness to get involved. What is the potential for expansion for this along with the time frame. It's my understanding that the weather may force the British to take some very strong, quick action rather than to look for protracted involvement, not only because of weather but again for the potential of bringing in the Cubans and the Soviets or someone else?

SECRETARY HAIG: There's some truth in that. It would take another ten days, incidentally, for the ground force contingent of the British deployed forces to get to where they could be used. So today, tomorrow, the next day, no. Maybe they could cut it down to a week.

MR. MICA: How big is their armed forces?

SECRETARY HAIG: I think there are two groups, one of 3,000 and another of about 4,000. So you don't have force ratios that would in any way suggest success if they went into an amphibious assault; and amphibious assault is almost impossible anyway. There's a large, very shallow shelf around the islands, especially that portion of some 200 islands, but where the inhabitants live. They could move in to some of the other islands without any difficulty at all immediately and that's a psychological blow for the Argentine Government.

I think this thing is going to be resolved on political grounds one way or the other, but I do think the British have every intention of having at it.

MR. MICA: With regard to the Cuba or Russian involvement, have you assessed the potential? Is there any amassing of supplies?

SECRETARY HAIG: I'm not worried about -- I could tell you, the Argentines hinted to me. I don't believe it. But I think it was a lever application that the Soviets had hinted to them that Soviet submarines could take care of some British ships and no one would know who did it.

CHAIRMAN ZABLOCKI: Mr. Solarz.

MR. SOLARZ: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Secretary, I think most of us recognize that it's impossible to be both a mediator and a cheerleader at the

same time, and so long as there was or remains any kind of a plausible possibility, if we can help bring about a negotiated resolution to the conflict, I think there's widespread understanding of the necessity for some kind of a publicly even-handed approach to this, whatever we may be doing quietly to help the British in other ways.

But if Argentina should reject our proposal, or if it already has, at what point do you think it would be or will be appropriate for us to publicly manifest our support for the British position, given what I gather is the real beating we're taking in Britain from public opinion in the press for not having, from their point of view, done more.

SECRETARY HAIG: No, no. I'm not particularly worried about that, but the answer to your questions is "immediately." As soon as we are convinced, and we're rapidly becoming that, then we have to make it clear for world public opinion to add the additional pressures to get a change in the Argentine demeanor and attitude as well as to fulfill our historic obligation.

CHAIRMAN ZABLOCKI: Mr. Bowen?

MR. BOWEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Secretary, I gather that the British believe that the South Georgia Island offers them a much more strategically important outpost and also a better angle for a slice at Antarctica in terms of strategic development there.

Is there any possibility of dividing the two, with the British retaining South Georgia and then moving into some kind of a Panama Canal type situation in which, for the next couple of decades, the British would administer South Georgia Island and then sovereignty will transfer to Argentina? Something of that sort?

SECRETARY HAIG: South Georgia, of course, is viewed as a dependency of the Falklands. It is in a distinct category. I don't think it either has the same importance in Argentina, while at the same time it has somewhat more importance in Britain.

MR. BOWEN: Which lends itself more easily to this kind of solution.

SECRETARY HAIG: That's right. On the other hand, it's the basic issue of the Falklands themselves (or the Malvinas), and that is that while the Argentines claim

sovereignty over the three groups of islands -- the Sandwich, the Georgias, and the Malvinas -- it's the Malvinas that is the key focus. And it's there where they insist on a transfer of sovereignty, as I say, a priori or de facto, and it's that that the British cannot politically do, and it's that that we cannot politically endorse because it would reward aggression.

So the other parts are more manageable, you're correct, and I think we could solve those rather simply.

CHAIRMAN ZABLOCK: Mr. Lagomarsino.

MR. LARGOMARSINO: Mr. Secretary, I don't know if you saw the story in the LA Times about the time that you took off on your mission, it interviewed some political scientists around the country who all said -- the ones they got to say it -- that your mission was premature. The fleet had already sailed, of course.

Was there a discussion in Argentina, as far as you were able to find out, whether it was a question of the Falklands or say the Beagle Channel? Did they consider the Beagle Channel as a way to divert the public attention?

SECRETARY HAIG: No. The Beagle Channel, as you know, a year and a half ago the parties agreed to let the Pope adjudicate, and the Papal Delegate came up with a solution which was very close to the previous adjudicated solution that was largely British run and which favored Chile rather substantially as does international law.

So here again it's the Argentines who have refused to accept the adjudication that they agreed to enter into on the Beagles.

MR. LARGOMARSINO: They're on the other side of that one.

SECRETARY HAIG: That's right. But I think because of the Catholic character of Argentina, no regime could have, in the face of Papal adjudication, move boldly in and seized the Beagle Channel Islands. They couldn't do that.

MR. LARGOMARSINO: Chile actually has played that one, from all the stuff I've been able to read, played it very moderately, I guess is the best way to put it, because they -- it's pretty obvious from reading the statement what

the Pope decided,, but Chile has never come out and said, "Hey, we want."

SECRETARY HAIG: No, they haven't, because they feel that the law is on their side, the two most recent adjudications that come out in their favor, but they're very fearful that if Argentina gets away with the seizure of the Falklands, next they're going to seize the Beagles.

MR. LARGOMARSINO: Okay. Now let me ask you another question. How much of what you've told us can we discuss with outside?

SECRETARY HAIG: What I have said about the current state of negotiation is extremely sensitive, and I've been very frank here. We may be doing something as early as tomorrow on the subject, but I have still some diplomatic communications to conclude and it would be disaster if you walked out of here and said that Haig says things look grim. You can say that the situation does not look -- it doesn't justify any optimism at this point.

CHAIRMAN ZABLOCK: MR. Fountain?

MR. FOUNTAIN: Mr. Secretary, I think when you responded to somebody by saying, "If necessary, the extent of our preparedness is to act immediately," I think you took most of the questions I had in mind, but if this thing goes on, certainly the combat will not be confined just to the Falkland Islands.

Is there a probability that there might be an all-out air attack from Argentina on the entire British fleet, and a bombardment of Argentine territory by the British?

SECRETARY HAIG: I think the British have made it very clear they don't intend to go beyond the sphere of the Falklands and the 200-mile sanitized zone they've drawn around it. But you're absolutely right. The very action of the Argentines will counter trigger counter-action, and so once that happens, if the Argentines conduct that action outside that 200-mile circle, then I know the British will feel free to attack the mainland or anything else. But they're not going to get in too close because of the land-based air advantage that the Argentines have.

CHAIRMAN ZABLOCK: We'll have one more question. The Secretary has to leave at 5:15.

MEMBER: Very quickly. This is a specific question.

Has the matter of the possible export of J-65/16 engines for Argentine A-1s come to your attention?

SECRETARY HAIG: (Nodded in affirmative.)

MEMBER: Have we stopped that?

SECRETARY HAIG: Stopped at the port.

MEMBER: And there will be no further.

SECRETARY HAIG: (Shook head in negative.)

CHAIRMAN ZABLOCKI: Thank you very much, Mr. Secretary, on behalf of all of us.

(The meeting adjourned at 5:16 p.m.)