

APPEAL BY UN SECRETARY GENERAL

The FCO spoke to Sir Anthony Parsons this afternoon. He does not want us to leak the fact that the Secretary General apologised for his statement. That would damage his relations with De Cuellar. Worse, if it emerged in New York that he apologised, the whole Latin American group would put pressure on him, probably with a view to convening a Security Council meeting.

But Sir A. Parsons agrees that the following points can be made to the media:

(a) He had told the Secretary General that any suggestion that we had failed to comply with Security Council Resolution 502 was unacceptable and that it was Argentina which was in breach of the Resolution. The Secretary General took these points.

(b) The Secretary General's appeal has no formal status whatsoever. It is simply a press release put out by his spokesman and is in fact the least formal document which can be issued in the United Nations.

(c) The appeal has not been circulated as a document of the UN Security Council or General Assembly, nor has it been communicated to us in any formal way.

(d) This appeal is in no sense a major event. No-one in New York expects us to respond to it.

You may be able to give the impression that the Opposition are making a disproportionate fuss about a not very important event.

/For background

For background information only, I understand that when Mr. Healey saw the UN Secretary General recently, the idea arose that if hostilities developed, the UN Secretary General might issue a grand formal appeal to the parties to desist. No commitment was made. But Mr. Healey rang Sir A. Parsons this morning from Philadelphia in a considerable state of excitement to say that he understood the Secretary General had issued such an appeal. Sir A. Parsons disabused him: what the Secretary General had done was nothing of the sort. It seems likely that Mr. Healey, perhaps before he rang Sir A. Parsons, had communicated his excitement to Mr. Foot.

A. J. COLES

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