



10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

24 May, 1982.

Dear Brigadier Herbert.

Thank you for your letter of 20 May about the Falkland Islands.

It has always been our wish to find a negotiated settlement to the dispute, and we have sought one in good faith. No one can contradict that. We have been negotiating for six weeks; and we have considered seven different sets of proposals. We have sought the implementation of the UN Security Council resolution demanding the withdrawal of Argentine forces, and we have sought it by peaceful means. But the Argentines have been intransigent, and have never shown any inclination to implement the resolution.

We were willing to accept the proposals based on the Peruvian President's ideas. They could have led to an almost immediate ceasefire. But Argentina rejected them.

This week we handed the UN Secretary General our proposals for a peaceful settlement. These represented the limit to which we believed it was right to go. The Argentine response was in effect a total rejection of our proposals. The UN Secretary General has now put forward some ideas of his own. But some of these resemble our own; they are the very ones which have been rejected by the Argentine response to our own proposals; and it is inconceivable that Argentina could genuinely accept them.

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There are some principles we have to uphold. Aggression must not be allowed to succeed. International law must be upheld. Sovereignty cannot be changed by invasion. The liberty of the Falkland Islanders must be restored.

No one should doubt our determination to uphold these principles. Our cause is just. We have been doing everything reasonable to secure a negotiated settlement. But Argentina has rejected proposal after proposal. One is bound to ask whether the Junta have ever intended to seek a peaceful settlement, or whether they have sought merely to confuse and prolong the negotiations while remaining in illegal possession of the Islands. They began this crisis, and the key to peace is in their hands. Until they show they are willing to use it, we will continue to exercise our rights of self defence, including the use of force.

Yours sincerely
Margaret Thatcher

Brigadier Michael Harbottle, OBE.