

BRITISH EMBASSY  
BUENOS AIRES

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C C Bright Esq  
SAmD  
FCO*Dear Colin,*

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RECEIVED 14 MAY 1981		
DESK OFFICER		REPLY
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*Mr Fearns  
14/5 - C. Bright*

## ARGENTINE PRESS COMMENT ON THE FALKLANDS

1. You may be interested to see the enclosed translation of a La Prensa article on the Falklands dispute. The author, Schönfeld, is normally a rational and objective commentator, but the Falklands issue seems to inflame him every few months, with results such as the enclosed. He manages here to combine Argentine suspicions about oil, Anglo-Chilean complicity, and grand South Atlantic strategic considerations with contemptuous dismissal of the MFA's policy over the Islands.

2. Camilión's <sup>49</sup>take will not be made any easier by this kind of attack. In the only published remarks I have seen from him on the Falklands, he managed to say practically nothing, referring merely to the fact that a negotiating round had recently taken place, and that it looked as though there would be another round.

*Dear Colin**Amended*A R Murray  
(Head of Chancery)cc: HE Mr R M Hunt CMG  
Governor  
Government House  
Port Stanley.

Leader in La Prensa, Wednesday 15 April 1981

ABOUT THE MALVINAS

WHEN WILL THE MERRY-GO-ROUND OF INSUBSTANTIAL NEGOTIATIONS  
WITH GREAT BRITAIN END?

By Manfred Schönfeld

"This is the San Miguel merry-go-round; he who laughs is sent  
to the barracks." (A nursery rhyme)

Recent statements by the new Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr  
Camilión, about the Malvinas, show that in this context he has  
already fully adapted to the game that London started fifteen years  
ago, and that for the last five years or so has been referred to as  
"rounds" of negotiations.

We must assume that the idea was to stress the humorous, mock-  
ing spirit with which London surely deals with this question, given  
the inaction, apathy and indifference of our authorities. For there  
is no other way to describe the Argentine attitude; in short, it  
means accepting the fact that during these fifteen years Argentina  
has offered and made a large number of genuine, constructive and,  
we could even say friendly and generous concessions to the other  
side. In return, and on the basis of an elementary "do ut des",  
she has received nothing, absolutely nothing. No attenuating cir-  
cumstances can be attached to this concept, nor any adjective that  
would serve as a justification, or give some slight nuance to make  
its content less negative, even if merely to keep up appearances.

Yet, of course, what is the use of going to the trouble of  
keeping up appearances? For whom? For a public opinion which, as  
in the case of our country, asks for no explanations (in this as  
well as in many other questions) or, if it does, gets no answer?

We have already seen what Dr Camilión had to say in this res-  
pect: that a "round" took place (which is not new to us), that  
another "round" is not anticipated at present, and that preparations  
are in hand for the next step, ie the possibility of arranging a new  
"round". In other words, the game goes on, comfortably, step by  
little step. After all, there is no hurry.

Need for a total change of direction

As stated recently in a speech by Rear Admiral Jorge A Fraga,  
the question of the Malvinas has been "frozen" since the beginning

of the negotiations "thanks to the wonderful British diplomacy all along."

The Admiral was subtly discreet. But, assuming that in this context it was not his intention to pay tribute to the Foreign Office - the "contrario sensu" between the lines is only too clear. If the British diplomacy was wonderful - and here we fully agree with Admiral Fraga - unfortunately the Argentine diplomacy was just the opposite. It has allowed the Foreign Office to make fun of all of us, of our good faith, of our spirit open to concessions, of the civilised, tolerant and peaceful way in which we have handled this question.

The conclusion to be drawn from the above is obvious. The Argentine attitude must change, and not gradually. (In a different field we have already seen that "gradualism" leads to nothing but failure.)

As far as the Malvinas are concerned, the change must be a 180° turn, ie the creation of a new de facto situation, complete and irreversible. We should not even get involved in a new "round", because that would be to expose ourselves once more to - excuse my colloquial language - leg-puffing.

### Threefold Urgency

The urgency in this question is, in our opinion, threefold. First, it is increasingly obvious that there is offshore oil in the area (a fact which was not suspected when negotiations started, because in those days, before the Middle East 1973 war and the subsequent energy crisis, the whole world attached only minor importance to offshore oil and gas fields).

*we all  
agree  
justice* It is the assumption that such oil exists that has suddenly made the Islands important to Britain, a country which has considerable and valuable knowhow in this type of exploitation (and which, incidentally - should we recover the Islands - would not be too long in recovering from her initial upset to seek pragmatically some kind of co-operation in the enterprise of oil exploration with the legitimate owners and occupants of the Islands).

*unwelcome  
link* The second reason for urgency is our southern dispute with Chile, in which the intention of our neighbour on the other side of the Andes is only too clear. The acceptance of the principle contained in the proposal (sorry, in what has now luckily become the Pope's "suggestion") to draw a line offshore from a point called BX, located at sea and not on the mainland, would greatly favour the expansionist ambitions of Chile towards the Atlantic waters off the mouth of Magellan Strait.

Turned into a South Atlantic power with two parallel regions (the Beagle and the Magellan) Chile could then - if there were still a "de facto" possession of the Malvinas by Britain - combine her interests with the British oil interests without even breaking the concept. of the "sea of peace" or other similar clauses with nothing but a platonic content.

What is more important, however, is the obvious effort of the United States to rebuild an effective Inter-American defence system and, as far as the South Atlantic is concerned, probably start developing an equivalent to NATO. An objective that, in our opinion, is most commendable but which, it should be pointed out, would crystallise border disputes as well as any other sovereignty claim once the defence system begins to be organised.

Before this happens - and this will happen sooner or later, and it is to be hoped that it will be sooner than later in view of the permanent Soviet advance in all regions of the world - the Argentine borders must be clearly defined and all the territorial possessions of the country must be irreversibly recovered and restored to national sovereignty, not only "de jure" but also "de facto". If it is put off until some other time it would be much more difficult, if not too late.

It is therefore a question of ending the "merry-go-round". Or, in any case, let it be as the "ronda de San Miguel" nursery rhyme puts it. The British are laughing, laughing at us. Let them go "to the barracks" then, to see whether they are ready and can defend the part of the Argentine territory which they have held for a century and a half.