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LETTER DATED 26 MAY 1982 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF COLOMBIA TO
THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have pleasure in transmitting the text of the message from the President of Colombia, Dr. Julio César Turbay-Ayala, addressed to the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, as well as Mrs. Thatcher's reply to President Turbay.

Text of the message dated 21 May 1982 from the Government of
Colombia addressed to Mrs. Margaret Thatcher

"Dear Prime Minister,

"Your Government is well aware of the position adopted by the Colombian Government in the conflict between your country and Argentina regarding sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands. We were not in favour of convening a meeting of the Organ of Consultation because we believed that, before an attempt was made to apply the measures envisaged in the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance, it was absolutely essential to exhaust all political, legal and diplomatic possibilities in order to avoid a war with unforeseeable consequences, not only because of the number of innocent victims sacrificed in the armed confrontation but because of the serious tension which would be created between your country and Latin America, which at the universal level shares with the United Kingdom the defence of the democratic system.

"I know that the first military encounters have occurred between Argentinians and Britons, and I envisage with horror the extension of the war and its fatal consequences. My Government believes that the democratic nations have an obligation to strengthen the system against the risks which threaten it. In our view, this goal will be achieved not by weakening ourselves in bloody and sterile wars but by arming ourselves with the

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necessary patience to engage in a dialogue until a point of convergence can be found to restore the world's confidence in the elimination of the dangers of a new conflagration.

"There are many formulas which could be used, if not to solve the entire problem at the outset, at least to advance in new diplomatic contacts which would make it possible to work towards peaceful solutions.

"I am informed that the President of Peru has sent to your Government and to that of Argentina a proposal which could provide a basis for further talks. Naturally, this or any other formula which would make the danger of war recede interests us as democrats. The Colombian Government, which has observed a position of respect for its legal tradition, believes that your Government will be very understanding of Colombia's concern to find peaceful solutions which would avoid an aggravation of the already very dangerous conflict between the United Kingdom and Argentina.

"We already offer the co-operation of the Government of Colombia in whatever peace formula would best meet the interests of the United Kingdom and of Argentina - countries to which we feel bound by old and strong ties.

"Yours very sincerely,

(Signed) "Julio César TURBAY-AYALA
"President of the Republic of Colombia"

Text of the message dated 25 May 1982 from the Government of
the United Kingdom addressed to the President of the Republic
of Colombia, Dr. Julio César Turbay-Ayala

"Dear Mr. President,

"I was most grateful for your thoughtful message of 21 May about the Falkland Islands. We have been much aware in recent weeks of the constructive approach which you and your Government have adopted towards this tragic situation.

"I agree whole-heartedly with you that it should be for democratic nations to set the world an example, by the patience with which they pursue peaceful negotiations and by their reluctance to resort to military force. I am sure you will recognize that in the seven weeks of negotiations in which we have engaged in good faith since Argentina invaded British territory, we have shown the greatest patience, as well as the utmost open-mindedness and flexibility, consistent with the basic principles of international law and of the United Nations Charter. These are the principles which Britain and Colombia, as democratic nations, share.

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"The difficulty throughout has been Argentina's refusal to match our constructive approach. President Galtieri and his colleagues have rejected every proposal which has been put to them which would have led to a cease-fire coupled with a withdrawal of Argentine forces, as required by Security Council resolution 502 (1982). We looked closely and urgently at President Belaunde's recent proposals, which you mention, and I remain grateful to President Belaunde for his continued concern and active interest.

"The essential first stage must, however, be a firm indication that Argentina is ready to comply with Security Council resolution 502 (1982), which requires the withdrawal of its forces from the islands. It is because there has hitherto been no sign that Argentina is willing to take this step that we have been obliged to increase our military, as well as our diplomatic and economic, pressure on Argentina. We have, at every stage in this conflict, stated our position with clarity, and have confined ourselves to using the absolute minimum of force necessary to impose pressure on Argentina to restore the rights of the islanders and to protect our own forces, in accordance with our rights of self-defence under Article 51 of the United Nations Charter.

"I share your anxieties on the possible effect of this crisis on relations between my country and those of Latin America. As you know, we attach great importance to our relations with the region and our consistent objective has been to foster and strengthen them. It is no wish of ours that they should be put at risk. But I hope that you can agree that no country should be allowed to seek a resolution of territorial disputes by force, if democratic freedoms are to be maintained. If aggression is not firmly resisted, the consequences throughout the world would be grave.

"The point at issue has been and remains Argentine aggression. No one regrets more than I do that Argentina has so far resisted all our efforts to achieve a peaceful settlement. We have never wanted to resort to military action; but Argentine obduracy has left us no choice. The decision to end the present conflict rests squarely with Argentina.

"If you, Mr. President, can bring home to the Argentine Government not only the extent of our determination to achieve a just solution to the crisis but also the imperative need to withdraw their forces from the Falkland Islands in accordance with Security Council resolution 502 (1982), you would be making a contribution to the peace of South America and of the world which it would be hard to exaggerate.

"Yours sincerely,

(Signed) "Margaret Thatcher"

I should be grateful if you would have these communications circulated as a Security Council document.

(Signed) Carlos SANZ de SANTAMARIA
Ambassador
