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Letter dated 24 September 2021 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In accordance with the published instructions for the Right of Reply, the United Kingdom would like to exercise the Right of Reply in response to the statement of the distinguished Representative of Argentina.

On 21 September, during agenda item 8 of the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly, General debate, the Representative of Argentina made reference to the United Kingdom's sovereignty over the Falklands Islands, and South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands, further to which the United Kingdom wishes to place the following statement in the official record of proceedings:

The United Kingdom has no doubt about its sovereignty over the Falkland Islands and South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands and surrounding maritime areas of both territories, nor about the principle and the right of self-determination for the Falkland Islanders as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and in article one of the two International Covenants on human rights, by virtue of which they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.

This means there can be no dialogue on sovereignty unless the Falkland Islanders so wish. The 2013 referendum – in which 99.8 per cent of those who voted wanted to maintain their current status as a territory of the United Kingdom – sent a clear message that the people of the Islands do not want dialogue on sovereignty. Argentina should respect those wishes.

Reference has been made to certain resolutions, but none of these modify or dilute the obligation of Nations to respect the legally binding principle of self-determination. The United Kingdom Government attaches great importance to the principle and the right of self-determination as set out in Article 1.2 of the Charter of the United Nations and article 1 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, respectively.

As such, the United Kingdom remains committed to defending the rights of self-determination for the people of the Falklands Islands, and to determine



their own political, social and economic future. This includes unequivocal support for the right of the Falkland Islanders to develop their natural resources for their own economic benefit.

The United Kingdom's forces in the South Atlantic are entirely defensive and are at the appropriate level to ensure the defence of the Falkland Islands against any potential threat.

The United Kingdom's relationship with the Falkland Islands, and all of its Overseas Territories, is a modern one based on partnership, shared values, and the right of the people of each territory to determine their own future.

The United Kingdom seeks a productive and friendly relationship with Argentina and regrets that Argentina chooses to focus on issues where we disagree. We continue to value the varied areas, such as health and human rights, where we can work together.

I should be grateful if you have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 8.

(Signed) Barbara **Woodward**
