



Security Council

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LETTER DATED 23 JUNE 1982 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND
TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE
SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to refer to the letter dated 18 June 1982 (S/15234) from the Charge d'Affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Argentina ("the Argentine letter") and, on instructions from my Government, to state the following.

Aggression

The Argentine letter refers to "armed aggression" on the part of the United Kingdom and contains several other tendentious statements of a similar nature. What are the facts? First, it will be recalled that on 1 April 1982 the Security Council issued an appeal to Argentina and the United Kingdom to refrain from the use of force (S/14944). Secondly, I accepted that appeal on behalf of the United Kingdom (S/PV.2345, p.36). Thirdly, the Representative of Argentina remained silent: Argentine armed forces invaded the Falkland Islands on 2 April and South Georgia on 3 April. Finally, the Security Council, in Resolution 502 (1982), characterised this use of force as an invasion which had caused a breach of the peace in the region of the Falkland Islands. It is clear from the foregoing, as well as from the definition of the term "aggression" put forward by the General Assembly in its Resolution 3314 (XXIX), that by its first use of armed force in defiance of the Security Council's appeal Argentina committed acts of armed aggression against the United Kingdom and the people of the Falkland Islands. The Argentine aggression was the more serious because negotiations were still in progress, the latest meeting having been held in a positive spirit at the end of February 1982. Argentina's action thus violated both the third and fourth paragraphs of Article 2 of the Charter - the fundamental principles of peaceful settlement and non-use of force. Argentina also violated the rights of the Falkland Islanders (a permanent population of British descent and nationality) under Article 73 of the Charter.

In the face of this illegal use of force by Argentina, the United Kingdom has been exercising its inherent right of self-defence recognized by Article 51 of the Charter. British forces have now recovered possession of all the British territory illegally occupied by Argentine forces.

Cessation of hostilities

The Argentine letter states that the current cessation of hostilities is "precarious" and that a total cessation of hostilities will be achieved only when the United Kingdom agrees to some pre-conditions sought by Argentina.

It will be recalled that on 15 June 1982, the United Kingdom addressed Notes through the Embassies of Switzerland and Brazil to Argentina, seeking confirmation of the total cessation of hostilities by Argentina. The British Note went on to propose that "the economic measures and the Exclusion Zones instituted by both parties should be lifted". The Argentine reply, set out in the letter dated 17 June 1982 from the Charge d'Affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Argentina (S/15228), did not accept the British proposals of a total cessation of hostilities and the lifting of economic measures and Exclusion Zones. In his further letter of 18 June 1982 (S/15234), the Charge d'Affaires stated that a total cessation of hostilities would be achieved only if certain conditions were fulfilled, including the withdrawal of British forces from the Islands.

As the Argentine authorities are aware, that condition is totally unacceptable to the British Government. British forces have been present in small numbers on the Islands for very many years. At present, British forces remain on the Falkland Islands in order to defend the Islands and their people against further Argentine attacks, and to help the Falkland Islanders to repair the extensive damage caused by the Argentine invasion and occupation. It will take a long time for life to return to normal there. The Islands are British territory and the population is British: there can therefore be no question of withdrawing British forces. It is not a case of "colonial domination" or "military occupation", as asserted in the Argentine letter: the Falkland Islanders totally rejected and resented the Argentine invasion and occupation: they welcomed their liberation by British forces from alien subjugation.

In these circumstances, the United Kingdom looks forward to receiving positive indications which will allow it to conclude that Argentina accepts that all hostilities in the South Atlantic are now at an end. If such indications are forthcoming, the United Kingdom stands ready to implement the proposals transmitted to Argentina on 15 June 1982.

I should be grateful if you would arrange for this letter to be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) A. D. PARSONS
