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General debate

Letter dated 25 September 2013 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

I have the honour to enclose herewith the text of the written statement of the delegation of the United Kingdom in exercise of the right of reply to the remarks made by the President of the Argentine Republic, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, on 24 September 2013 to the General Assembly (see annex).

I should be most grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 8.

(Signed) Mark **Lyll Grant**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative



Annex to the letter dated 25 September 2013 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Statement of the delegation of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in exercise of the right of reply to the remarks made by the President of the Argentine Republic in the general debate on 24 September 2013

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland has no doubt about its sovereignty over the Falkland Islands. 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, underlies our position. The United Kingdom is clear that the future of the Falkland Islands should be determined by the people of the Falkland Islands, in accordance with our obligations under the Charter.

In March 2013, the Falkland Islands Government held a referendum to seek the views of the people. The overwhelming majority of voters (99.8 per cent) voted to remain an Overseas Territory of the United Kingdom. The democratically elected representatives of the Falkland Islands presented the result of that referendum to the Special Committee on Decolonization in June, and asked the Committee to respect the principle of self-determination. They once again reiterated the historical facts that the Falkland Islands had no indigenous people and that no civilian population was removed prior to their ancestors settling on the Islands. They confirmed that they are a legitimate people with the right to have their wishes respected.

We regret that Foreign Minister Timmerman did not accept an invitation to meet with the Foreign Secretary and representatives of the Falkland Islands Government to discuss issues of mutual interest during his visit to London in February this year. The United Kingdom and the Falkland Islands Government have made clear that they remain willing and ready to cooperate with the Republic of Argentina on areas of mutual interest in the South Atlantic. However, the Republic of Argentina continues to reject these opportunities and has taken a number of actions that are harmful to the region, including the introduction of domestic legislation to restrict shipping to the Falkland Islands and penalize companies who wish to do business in or with the Islands. The United Kingdom Government was deeply concerned about disruptions in Argentina to shipping bound for the Falkland Islands during the 2012/13 cruise season, which appeared to be an attempt to threaten the livelihoods of the Falkland Islands community and prevent the legitimate pursuit of trade in the region. The United Kingdom hopes that the Republic of Argentina will take all necessary steps to prevent such action from happening again.

The Republic of Argentina's claims that the United Kingdom is militarizing the South Atlantic are wholly false. The United Kingdom has maintained a defensive military posture in the South Atlantic since the Republic of Argentina illegally invaded and occupied the Falkland Islands in 1982 and ignored a binding Security Council resolution to withdraw from the Islands. Since then, garrison numbers have been reduced to the minimum necessary for the Islands' defence.

With regard to nuclear weapons, the United Kingdom's position was clearly set out in its letter of 22 October 2012 ([A/67/544](#)). To reiterate, the United Kingdom ratified the protocols to the Nuclear Weapons Free Zone covering Latin America and the Caribbean (the Treaty of Tlatelolco) in 1969, and it fully respects these obligations. The United Kingdom's position on its deterrent is unambiguous: the United Kingdom will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States parties to, and in compliance with, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

The United Kingdom remains fully committed to defending the rights of the people of the Falkland Islands to determine their own political, social and economic future, and calls on the Republic of Argentina to respect their wishes.
