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QUESTION OF THE FALKLAND ISLANDS (MALVINAS)

Letter dated 8 October 1985 from the Permanent Representative  
of Argentina to the United Nations addressed to the  
Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of a communiqué issued at the close of the meeting held in Madrid on 6 October 1985 between His Excellency Dr. Raúl Alfonsín, President of Argentina, and the Rt. Hon. David Steel, M.P., leader of the British Liberal Party.

I request you to have this letter and its annex distributed as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 23, and also brought to the attention of the Special Committee on Decolonization.

(Signed) Carlos Manuel MUÑIZ  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative

ANNEX

Communiqué issued at the close of the meeting held in Madrid on 6 October 1985 between H.E. Dr. Raúl Alfonsín, President of the Argentine Republic, and the Rt. Hon. David Steel, M.P., leader of the British Liberal Party

On Sunday, 6 October 1985, in Madrid, a meeting was held between Dr. Raúl R. Alfonsín, President of the Argentine Republic, and the Rt. Hon. David Steel, M.P., leader of the British Liberal Party. President Alfonsín was accompanied by Dr. Jorge Sábató, Secretary of State for International Relations and Worship of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Argentina, and Mr. Steel was accompanied by Lord Tordoff, leader of the Liberal Party in the House of Lords. President Alfonsín and Mr. Steel recalled that they had participated in meetings sponsored by the Liberal International, when democracy had not yet been restored in Argentina.

Mr. Steel indicated to President Alfonsín how much he valued the results achieved in restoring democracy in Argentina and the determined and successful efforts he had made to ensure respect for human and civil rights. He also commended the measures taken by the democratic Government to bring to justice those who had been responsible for violations of human rights and breaches of the law.

President Alfonsín and Mr. Steel welcomed the present strengthening of democracy in Latin America, which was leading to the restoration of the rights, freedom and dignity of individuals and peoples. They agreed that that was essential in order to further development and stability in the world.

President Alfonsín and Mr. Steel underscored the importance of co-operation among the democratic countries in order to strengthen democratic values and institutions in the world, and expressed their confidence that the consolidation and enhancement of democracy in Latin America would facilitate growing co-operation with Europe. Both commended the role played by the liberal parties, as members of the Liberal International, in furthering that co-operation, and expressed their hope that contacts between the political parties of the two continents would be strengthened.

President Alfonsín and Mr. Steel indicated their firm conviction that the persistence of the economic crisis and the external debt presented the greatest threat to democracy and peace in Latin America. They emphasized that it was important to understand the direct link between established democracy and economic progress for the well-being of peoples and social stability. In that regard, they stressed the need to try to achieve more stable financial and trade conditions that were long-lasting and less restrictive, and they emphasized the urgency of convening a meeting of the Governments of creditor and debtor countries in order to find a political solution to the problem of the external debt.

President Alfonsín and Mr. Steel exchanged ideas on the situation in Central America, reiterating their support for the efforts of the Contadora countries. President Alfonsín referred to Argentina's participation in the recently formed Contadora Support Group, composed of democratic Governments of Latin America. Mr. Steel welcomed the setting up of that Group.

President Alfonsín and Mr. Steel discussed the state of affairs between Argentina and the United Kingdom. They recalled the friendly relations which both countries had traditionally maintained and the extent to which the hundreds of thousands of British residents and their descendants, who had for long formed part of the Argentine people, had contributed to those friendly relations throughout history and continued to do so. They also indicated their firm desire for a resumption of relations between the two countries and were in agreement that such a resumption should be based on an agenda that would include all issues dividing the two countries.

In that connection, President Alfonsín and Mr. Steel agreed on the need to find a peaceful and negotiated settlement to the dispute over the Malvinas Islands and the other problems pending between the two countries. In their view, the fortieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations provided a propitious occasion to begin that process.

They recalled that prior to the conflict in 1982 the Governments of the two countries, for almost 20 years, although intermittently, had been trying to reach an agreement on the future of the Malvinas Islands. In 1980 the British Government had held talks with the then Argentine Government concerning a possible change of sovereignty. President Alfonsín and Mr. Steel maintained that, democracy having been restored in Argentina, both countries should now work together, and they indicated their firm resolve to find a solution to that long-standing dispute. Both underscored the importance of providing the islanders with effective guarantees of the preservation for their way of life.

President Alfonsín and Mr. Steel agreed that the process of achieving a peaceful and negotiated solution to the dispute should include a formal cessation of hostilities and a lifting of the exclusion zone, the restoration of diplomatic and trade relations, and the resumption of negotiations on all issues concerning the future of the Malvinas Islands, including sovereignty. Preparations for those talks should be undertaken simultaneously and without delay by both Governments.

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