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Anexo 09: Relaciones con Latinoamérica.

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RELATIONS WITH LATIN AMERICA

1. The Falklands crisis has affected not only Britain's relations with Latin America but also those of the European Community and, more particularly, of the United States.
2. Following repossession of the Falkland Islands, Britain and the West will need to give priority to repairing relations with the region. The scope for this will be influenced by the military outcome: in particular, whether Argentina continues hostilities and seeks Latin American support. The policy which we ourselves adopt towards the future of the Falkland Islands will play its part. It is hard to make predictions at this stage. But, if active confrontation continues, the task of restoring relations with the region will be made much more difficult.
3. For Britain, Latin America is important primarily for economic and commercial reasons. It is an area of vigorous growth and is an expanding source of commodities and raw materials. Venezuela and Mexico are major oil-producers. Brazil, Argentina (and also Mexico) have ambitious and advanced civil nuclear programmes. There is substantial British investment in the region and British banks have played an important role in financing Latin America's development needs. Although British exporters have so far failed to capitalise sufficiently on the opportunities, the area offers a substantial and fast-growing market and considerable major project business.
4. The area is also of increasing political significance. The UK has sought in recent years to repair previous neglect and to demonstrate that we take Latin America seriously. Although the region as a whole is not of first importance to us strategically, the inherent instability of many Latin American Governments and internal economic disparities provide potential for Soviet/Cuban mischief-making, of which the dangers have already been clearly shown in Central America. A defeated Argentina may give further

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opportunities to the Soviet Union. The West, including Britain, needs to work to buttress stability and democracy in the region so as to preclude opportunities for Soviet infiltration. We have also to take account of the growing political influence of Brazil, Venezuela and Mexico and to encourage them to play a more forward and moderating role in international fora and to serve as a bridge between North and South. The accession of Spain and Portugal to the European Community will give fresh impetus to the Community's efforts to consolidate and develop relations with the region.

5. It is also in the Latin American interest to rebuild relations with Britain and with Europe generally. Here again the prime interest is economic and commercial. The Community is an important market for their commodities and the provision of finance and technology is essential for the region's development. But there has also been a genuine wish to improve the level of political exchanges. The region has close historical and cultural affinities with Europe and, whatever the Third World labels, is generally pro-Western in its underlying sympathies. Europe has offered an alternative to the increasingly uneasy relationship with the United States. Memories of British participation in the Latin American independence struggle, the leading part played by British capital and entrepreneurs in the region's development and the sizeable British communities which remain in Latin America have provided a solid platform of goodwill towards Britain.

6. These factors have been reflected in Latin American reactions to the Argentine invasion of the Falklands. With certain exceptions (eg Venezuela, Panama), the countries of the region have responded slowly and with reluctance to Argentine pressures. There is little love for Argentina or for its military government in the region: either openly or in private, there has been wide condemnation of the Argentine aggression. It has in the

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circumstances been quite remarkable that, despite Latin American support for Argentina's sovereignty claim and the considerable pull of regional solidarity, the military conflict in the Falklands has reached its culminating stage without any Latin American country, other than Argentina itself, as yet taking direct action on its relations with the UK. Provided that we can now repossess the Islands quickly and without too much bloodshed, there is a good chance that we can emerge from the crisis with our bilateral relations bruised (badly in some cases) but not seriously or lastingly damaged.

7. In moving to restore good relations the UK will nonetheless need to move with tactful regard for Latin American sensitivities. A breathing-space will be required during which contacts can be gradually resumed. Ministerial exchanges may have to wait a while. We shall also need to be selective in our approach, taking account of countries' individual attitudes and interests: as well as bearing in mind that too early or too demonstrative gestures towards those countries who have given most active support to Argentina (eg Venezuela) would be badly received in this country. We should make particular targets of the moderates (Mexico, Colombia, Costa Rica) and of those who might act as a restraining influence on future Argentine action (Brazil). We shall need to be sensitive towards Chile (where the price for the support given us may require a softening of our previous attitude to its human rights performance).

8. In seeking to pick up the threads of our relations, we shall need to move gradually, using traditional methods of political and commercial diplomacy, such as:

- promotion of non-official visits (inward and outward) in the cultural, academic and trade fields through the British Council, Canning House, Chambers of Commerce, etc:
- coordination of an official visits programme (first at senior official level and, when and where the situation allows, at Ministerial level);

- a vigorous information effort both through our Embassies and through Latin American correspondents in London. Special attention to Latin America in official speeches and statements;
- encouragement to British businessmen to visit the market;
- Government funding for major project business: a positive review of ECGD credit levels for Latin America: a review of our aid programme to Latin America.

9. In working to reassert the general Western interest in Latin America (and to limit the scope for the Soviet Union to gain influence by default), we should recognise that, at least in the immediate aftermath of the Falklands crisis, our EC partners may be able to act more effectively than we can. This will of course be particularly the case in attempts to restrain Argentina itself from any dangerous political re-alignment. We have however to keep in mind that if Argentina continues hostilities there will be a need for us to seek to maintain EC sanctions. On this will depend whether the EC will be able to get back on terms with other countries in the region. If so, the scope for positive policies to consolidate the relationship (EC/Andean Pact, EC/GRULA, encouragement of European Parliament links with Latin America) might be considered at an early stage by the Ten.

10. For the United States the problem of restoring relations with the region will be particularly acute. The Reagan Administration has given a high priority to its relations with Latin America and to strengthening the region's resistance to Soviet/Cuban expansionism. The Falklands crisis has been a severe setback. The US has borne a great deal of the brunt of Latin American criticism, and doubts about US motives in the region have been accentuated. It will be a matter of urgency for the US to repair the damage. But developments on the Falklands will continue to affect their ability to do this and will thus have a bearing on UK/US relations.

Conclusions

11. Western relations with Latin America will inevitably have suffered considerable damage as a result of the Falklands crisis. Developments in the Falklands, particularly the degree of Argentine determination to continued confrontation, will condition the scope for healing the wounds. But Latin American countries have so far shown reluctance to move from rhetoric to action: and there will be a mutual interest in a gradual resumption of normal relations. It will be to our advantage to support Community action to repair the relationship. We shall need to take particular account of the very high priority which the United States attaches to its relations with the region.