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10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

13 May 1982

*Re: Team*

I have received Mr. Alexander Moffatt's letter of 21 April about Argentina's potential capacity to produce nuclear weapons. I understand that you suggested that Mr. Moffatt should write to me about this, and that you were both concerned by the recent BBC 2 Newsnight Special entitled "Germany and the Argentine Bomb".

I fully share Mr. Moffatt's concern about the possibility of Argentina acquiring nuclear weapons, particularly as the Argentine Government has shown no sign of being willing to accede to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. We and other likeminded governments will maintain all the pressure we can on Argentina to adopt a more responsible approach in nuclear matters.

The IAEA have stated that all significant nuclear activities in Argentina of which they are aware are under safeguards. Argentina has also signed agreements which will put under safeguards all but one of the major facilities they are constructing, as soon as these come into operation. The exception is their reprocessing plant. We hope they will put this plant under safeguards in the same way. But, as far as we are aware, Argentina at present has access only to fuel which is subject to safeguards, and this fuel will in fact continue to be subject to safeguards while it is reprocessed. The Argentine Government spokesman who participated in the programme also stated that safeguards would be strictly applied in the case of any Argentine sales of plutonium to other countries (which is in any case unlikely for a number of years to come). Nevertheless, I do assure you that we do not take this problem lightly and will continue to keep it under close review.

/ Mr. Moffatt

Mr. Moffatt also commented on the US Administration's attitude to the Falklands crisis. As you know, the Administration have now come down firmly on our side. Whilst the American authorities continued their delicate endeavours to promote a peaceful settlement, we were able to appreciate their reluctance to side publicly with one of the parties to the dispute, since this would have undermined their ability to act as an effective intermediary. But we were always well aware of the considerable American public support for Britain's position and the underlying Administration views.

Yours sincerely  
Margaret Thatcher

Tam Dalyell, Esq., MP.