

RESTRICTED

4331 - 2

GRS 497
RESTRICTED

FM FCO 101515Z
TO FLASH UKMIS NEW YORK
TELEGRAM NUMBER 367 OF 10 MAY.

YOUR TEL 692: FALKLANDS MILITARY ACTION ON 9 MAY

1. WE ARE STILL LACKING FULL DETAILS OF THE ACTION ON 9 MAY. THE FOLLOWING, A SVNTHESIS OF MOD STATEMENTS MADE IN THE COURSE OF THE DAY AND INFORMATION THEY HAVE SUBSEQUENTLY AGREED CAN BE RELEASED, MAY FORM THE BASIS FOR YOUR LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL.

BEGINS:

1. THERE WERE SEVERAL REPORTS ON 9 MAY OF MILITARY ACTION THAT DAY IN THE AREA OF THE FALKLAND ISLANDS. IN ORDER TO CLARIFY THESE SOMETIMES CONFLICTING REPORTS, I WISH TO PLACE ON RECORD THE FOLLOWING SUMMARY OF EVENTS. THESE MILITARY ACTIONS WERE TAKEN IN SUPPORT OF OUR DECLARATION ON 28 APRIL OF A TOTAL EXCLUSION ZONE AROUND THE FALKLAND ISLANDS.
2. IN THE COURSE OF THE DAY, THE BRITISH TASK FORCE ATTACKED MILITARY TARGETS IN THE VICINITY OF PORT STANLEY AIRFIELD. CERTAIN ARGENTINE MILITARY AIRCRAFT APPROACHED THE FALKLAND ISLANDS, BUT TURNED AWAY IN THE FACE OF ACTION BY THE TASK FORCE. AN ARGENTINE PUMA HELICOPTER WAS SHOT DOWN OVER THE ISLANDS LATER IN THE DAY.
3. AT 1130 GMT TWO OF OUR AIRCRAFT ON PATROL WELL WITHIN THE TEZ SIGHTED AN ARGENTINE FISHING VESSEL. THE VESSEL, NAMED NARWAL, HAD BEEN SHADOWING THE TASK FORCE FOR SOME DAYS. WE HAD REASON TO BELIEVE SHE WAS ENGAGED IN SURVEILLANCE. IRREFUTABLE EVIDENCE OF THIS WAS SUBSEQUENTLY FOUND ON BOARD IN DOCUMENTS CONTAINING THE VESSEL'S OPERATIONAL ORDERS. IN OUR ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE TEZ ON 28 APRIL, WE STATED THAT ANY SHIP, MILITARY OR CIVIL, FOUND WITHIN THE ZONE WITHOUT DUE AUTHORITY FROM THE MOD IN LONDON WOULD BE REGARDED AS OPERATING IN SUPPORT OF THE ILLEGAL OCCUPATION, WOULD BE REGARDED AS HOSTILE, AND WOULD BE LIABLE TO ATTACK BY BRITISH FORCES. ADDITIONALLY, ON 7 MAY,

1

RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

4331 - 2

HMG MADE CLEAR IN A STATEMENT THAT ALL ARGENTINE VESSELS INCLUDING MERCHANT VESSELS OR FISHING VESSELS APPARENTLY ENGAGED IN SURVEILLANCE OR INTELLIGENCE-GATHERING ACTIVITIES AGAINST BRITISH FORCES IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC, WOULD ALSO BE REGARDED AS HOSTILE AND WERE LIABLE TO BE DEALT WITH ACCORDINGLY. OUR AIRCRAFT THEREFORE DROPPED A SMALL BOMB ALONGSIDE THE VESSEL. THIS WAS FOLLOWED BY A SHORT BURST OF GUN FIRE FROM OUR AIRCRAFT. THE CREW THE SURRENDERED AND TOOK TO THEIR LIFEBOAT. THOSE WHO ABANDONED SHIP HAVE BEEN RECOVERED BY ROYAL NAVY HELICOPTERS AND ARE NOW ON ONE OF HER MAJESTY'S SHIPS. THE NAMES OF THE CREW HAVE BEEN PASSED TO THE ARGENTINES VIA DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS TODAY (10 MAY), AND ARRANGEMENTS WILL BE MADE FOR THEIR REPATRIATION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. THE NARWAL IS NOW IN THE CUSTODY OF THE ROYAL NAVY. OF THE 25 PEOPLE ON BOARD THE NARWAL, THERE WERE 14 CASUALTIES - ONE DEAD, ONE SERIOUSLY INJURED, AND 12 WITH MINOR INJURIES. THE INJURED ARE RECEIVING MEDICAL ATTENTION.

4. REPORTS FROM ARGENTINE SOURCES HAVE STATED THAT ONE OF OUR AIRCRAFT STRAFED LIFEBOATS FROM THE FISHING BOAT NARWAL AFTER THE INITIAL ATTACK. THERE IS NO TRUTH WHATSOEVER IN THIS CLAIM. HMG DEPLORE THESE TOTALLY UNFOUNDED ALLEGATIONS.

ENDS.

PYM

FALKLAND ISLANDS GENERAL
FCO
S AM D
CABINET OFFICE

ADDITIONAL DISTRIBUTION
FALKLAND ISLANDS