

FLASH

ZZ UKREP BRUSSELS
GRS 490
CONFIDENTIAL

BULLARD (4 COPIES)

FM FCO 291500Z MARCH 82
TO FLASH UKREP BRUSSELS
TELEGRAM NUMBER 260 OF 29 MARCH
INFO IMMEDIATE MODUK NAVY
FOR BULLARD

MY TELNO 2561 SOUTH GEORGIA

1. FOLLOWING IS DRAFT TEXT OF PARLIAMENTARY STATEMENT. BEGINS. AS MY NOBLE FRIEND THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (LORD TREFGARNE) INFORMED THE HOUSE ON 23 MARCH, A GROUP OF ARGENTINES, EMPLOYED BY A COMMERCIAL CONTRACTOR, MR DAVIDOFF, LANDED AT LEITH HARBOUR ON SOUTH GEORGIA ON 19 MARCH FROM AN ARGENTINE NAVAL TRANSPORT VESSEL. MR DAVIDOFF HAD BEEN FULLY INFORMED IN ADVANCE OF THE NEED TO SEEK THE NECESSARY PERMISSION FROM THE BRITISH AUTHORITIES AT GRYTVIKEN TO LAND AND TO CARRYOUT HIS WORK. MR DAVIDOFF'S COMMERCIAL CONTRACT IS A STRAIGHTFORWARD ONE. BUT IT DOES NOT ABSOLVE HIM FROM COMPLYING WITH NORMAL IMMIGRATION PROCEDURES. THIS HE FAILED TO DO: AND, WHEN THE ARGENTINE PARTY AT LEITH WAS REQUESTED BY THE BASE COMMANDER TO PROCEED TO GRYTVIKEN TO OBTAIN THE REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION, IT AGAIN FAILED TO COMPLY.

WE THEN SOUGHT THE COOPERATION OF THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT TO ARRANGE FOR THE REMOVAL OF THE PARTY, MAKING CLEAR THAT WE REGARDED THIS AS A POTENTIALLY GRAVE INCIDENT AND THAT WE COULD NOT ACCEPT AN ILLEGAL ARGENTINE PRESENCE ON BRITISH TERRITORY. THIS REQUEST WAS REJECTED. HMS ENDURANCE WAS ORDERED TO PROCEED TO THE AREA TO BE AVAILABLE TO ASSIST AS NECESSARY. SHE HAS BEEN STANDING BY AT GRYTVIKEN SINCE 24 MARCH. ON 25 MARCH AN ARGENTINE VESSEL DELIVERED FURTHER EQUIPMENT TO THE GROUP ASHORE AND THE ARGENTINE FOREIGN MINISTER HAS ASSERTED THAT ARGENTINE PERSONNEL IN SOUTH GEORGIA WILL BE GIVEN THE FULL PROTECTION OF THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT. THE DESPATCH OF ARGENTINE WARSHIPS TO THE AREA HAS BEEN REPORTED.

WE FACE A DANGEROUS SITUATION. IT HAS IN NO WAY BEEN OF OUR SEEKING. WE TAKE THE GRAVEST VIEW OF THIS INFRINGEMENT OF BRITISH SOVEREIGNTY AND OF THE ACTION TAKEN BY THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT. H M G REMAIN OF THE VIEW THAT THIS UNAUTHORISED PRESENCE ON BRITISH TERRITORY CANNOT BE ACCEPTED.

AT THE SAME TIME THE HOUSE WILL - I AM SURE - JOIN WITH ME IN RECOGNISING THAT A NAVAL CONFRONTATION BETWEEN A BRITISH WARSHIP AND ELEMENTS OF THE ARGENTINE FLEET IN THESE DISTANT WATERS WOULD BE A PERILOUS UNDERTAKING ENDANGERING LIVES AND THE STABILITY OF THIS WHOLE REGION. IT WOULD ALSO DESTROY ANY PROSPECT OF REACHING A FAIR AND AMICABLE SOLUTION OF THE LONG-STANDING DISPUTE BETWEEN OURSELVES AND ARGENTINA. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES IT IS OUR CLEAR DUTY TO PURSUE, WITH ALL THE IMAGINATION AND ENERGY AT OUR DISPOSAL, A DIPLOMATIC SOLUTION OF THIS SMALL BUT DANGEROUS PROBLEM. I MUST ASK THE HOUSE TO BEAR WITH ME WHILE WE CONTINUE OUR DIPLOMATIC EXCHANGES. TO RELEASE THE DETAILS OF THESE AT THIS STAGE WOULD MAKE THEM LESS RATHER THAN MORE LIKELY TO SUCCEED. MEANWHILE THE HOUSE WILL WISH TO KNOW THAT THE WHOLE QUESTION OF SECURITY IN THE FALKLANDS AREA IS UNDER CONSIDERATION, AND I CAN GIVE AN ASSURANCE THAT HMS ENDURANCE WILL REMAIN ON STATION FOR THE TIME BEING.

CARRINGTON

NNNN