

NO

FLASH

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BAFO 009/23

ADVANCE COPY

710

ZZ FCO

ZZ PORT STANLEY (PERS FOR GOV)

Hd/ SAMS

Hd/ Defs

Hd/ News

ZZ MODUK (NAVY)

PS

PS/LPS

PS/Mc huce

ZZ CINCFLEET

PS/PUS

G Giffard

M Ure

No. 10 D.S.

Cab. Off.

X10

[Standard]

GRS 350

CONFIDENTIAL

FM BUENOS AIRES 23/1642Z MAR 82

TO FLASH FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 91 OF 23 MARCH 1982

INFO FLASH PORT STANLEY (PERS FOR GOV), MODUK (NAVY) AND CINCFLEET

YOUR TELNO 64 (ILLEGAL LANDING ON SOUTH GEORGIA) HAS, OF COURSE, CROSSED WITH MY TELNO 89. I GAVE THE MESSAGE IN YOUR TELEGRAM TO ENRIQUE ROS OVER THE TELEPHONE AT 1505Z. HE WAS, OF COURSE, VERY DISTRESSED. HE REGRETS THAT HE HAS NO (REPEAT NO) WAY OF COMMUNICATING WITH THE MEN AT LEITH. I MUST MYSELF POINT OUT THAT MY TELNO 85 DID NOT CONVEY AN ASSURANCE BUT A STATEMENT WHICH BOTH BLANCO AND I UNDERSTOOD TO BE A FACT. I DO NOT THINK THERE WAS ANY INTENTION TO MISLEAD.

2. AT 1530Z I WAS SUMMONED BY FOREIGN MINISTER COSTA MENDEZ WHO, ON LOOKING THROUGH MY SPEAKING NOTES BASED ON YOUR TUR SAID

(A) HE WAS SURPRISED THAT HMG WAS PROCEEDING SO RAPIDLY TO SUCH VERY GRAVE ACTION, WITHOUT EXHAUSTING DIPLOMATIC RECOURSES. COULD NOT SUCH PRECIPITATE ACTION BE POSTPONED SEMI COLON

(B) HE MUST MOST SOLEMNLY WARN YOU THAT, IF HMG PROCEEDS WITH THE HARSH MEASURE OF TAKING THESE MEN UNDER ARREST ON A BRITISH WARSHIP TO PORT STANLEY, HE, ROS AND THOSE WHO ARE TRYING TO DEAL WITH US OVER THE FALKLANDS IN A MODERATE WAY WILL LOSE CONTROL OF EVENTS. OUR HARSH ACTION WILL PRODUCE A HARSH RESPONSE. HE COULD NOT PREDICT WHAT THIS WOULD BE, NOR COULD HE UNDERTAKE TO KEEP IT WITHIN BOUNDS.

KEEP IT WITHIN BOUNDS.

3. I POINTED OUT THAT THE TROUBLE WAS NOT OF OUR SEEKING, THAT A SUCCESSION OF WARNINGS AND ORDERS HAD BEEN GIVEN TO THE BUEN SUCESO AND DAVIDOFF, WHICH HAD BEEN IGNORED AND THAT NOW VERY LITTLE TIME REMAINED. COULD THE ARGENTINES FOR INSTANCE, OFFER TO ORDER THE BUEN SUCESO TO GO BACK TO LEITH AND TAKE THE MEN AWAY, AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO ACTION BY ENDURANCE? COSTA MENDEZ SAID HE WOULD ENQUIRE IF THIS COULD BE A PRACTICAL POSSIBILITY AND, IF SO, WITHIN THE BOUNDS OF SAVING FACE. BUT DOING SO WOULD TAKE A LITTLE TIME. HE URGED MOST EARNESTLY THAT, MEANWHILE, ENDURANCE SHOULD NOT TAKE ANY ACTION IN THIS CONTEXT WHICH COULD BE OBSERVED. THIS INCIDENT ONLY ILLUSTRATED THE NEED TO GET ON WITH THE MAIN NEGOTIATION. COULD IT NOT BE HELD OVER TO BE A FIRST SUBJECT FOR US THE QUOTE FIRE BRIGADE UNQUOTE TO DEAL WITH IN THE NEGOTIATING COMMISSION?

4. I MUST ADD MY OWN WARNING THAT, AS SEEN FROM HERE, THIS SPECTACULAR REACTION TO A PIECE OF TRIVIAL AND LOW-LEVEL MISBEHAVIOUR COULD WELL, IN THE CURRENT ATMOSPHERE, DO LASTING DAMAGE TO THE WHOLE STRUCTURE OF OUR FRUITFUL BILATERAL RELATIONS.

WILLIAMS

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SENT/RECD AT 23/1710Z JDG/*****