

CONFIDENTIAL

29190 - 1

ZZ PORT STANLEY  
GRS 528  
CONFIDENTIAL

Aw 040/325/12		
RECEIVED		
23 MAR 1982		
DESK OFFICER		REGISTRY
INDEX	PA	Action Taken

FM FCO 221430Z MARCH 82  
TO FLASH PORT STANLEY (PERSONAL FOR GOVERNOR)  
TELEGRAM NUMBER 33 OF 22 MARCH 1982  
AND FLASH TO BUENOS AIRES  
INFO IMMEDIATE MODUK NAVY, CINCFLEET.

9 MY TELNO 36: ILLEGAL LANDING ON SOUTH GEORGIA

1. ARGENTINE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES CALLED ON FEARN ON 22 MARCH TO INFORM US ON INSTRUCTIONS THAT THE BAHIA BUEN SUCEO HAD LEFT SOUTH GEORGIA ON 21 MARCH, LEAVING EQUIPMENT, CRANES AND TOOLS AT LEITH. MOLteni WAS UNCERTAIN WHETHER THIS MEANT THAT ALL PERSONNEL HAD LEFT WITH THE SHIP BUT ASSUMED THIS TO BE THE CASE.
2. MOLteni SAID THAT THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT HOPED THAT THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS INCIDENT WOULD NOT BE EXAGGERATED. THE ACTION TAKEV BY DAVIDOFF HAD BEEN ON HIS OWN RESPONSIBILITY AND IN NO WAY REFLECTED ANY DELIBERATE INTENTION BY THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT TO RAISE THE POLITICAL TEMPERATURE.
3. MOLteni SAID THAT IT SHOULD BE CLEAR THAT THE BAHIA BUEN SUCEO WAS NOT A WARSHIP. IT WAS A NAVAL TRANSPORT VESSEL OF THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT, OPERATED IN THE PRESENT CASE UNDER COMMERCIAL CHARTER TO DAVIDOFF AND WITHOUT SERVICE PERSONNEL ON BOARD. THERE HAD BEEN NO WEAPONS ON BOARD AND NONE TAKEN ON LAND. IF THERE HAD BEEN ANY HANDLING OF EQUIPMENT AT LEITH, THIS HAD BEEN ONLY TO PREPARE THE WHARF FOR DAVIDOFF'S ACTIVITIES. THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF DAVIDOFF'S TRIP WERE PREVIOUSLY KNOWN TO THE BRITISH EMBASSY IN BUENOS AIRES.
4. FEARN SAID THAT WE ON OUR PART HAD NO WISH TO BUILD UP THIS INCIDENT. WE WERE GRATEFUL FOR THE ACTION TAKEN ON THE SHIP'S DEPARTURE AND WE HOPED TO RECEIVE CONFIRMATION FROM GRyTVIKEN THAT ALL ARGENTINE PERSONNEL HAD LEFT LEITH. IF A SHORE PARTY REMAINED BEHIND, THEY WOULD CONTINUE TO BE WITHOUT OFFICIAL AUTHORISATION AND WOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO STAY. THE NUB OF THE PROBLEM WAS THAT DAVIDOFF HAD BEEN FULLY AWARE OF THE NEED TO

1  
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

29190 - 1

SEEK FORMAL CLEARANCE AT GRITYVIKEN BEFORE MAKING ANY LANDING IN SOUTH GEORGIA AND HE HAD FAILED TO DO THIS. WE ALSO HAD FIRM EVIDENCE THAT AN ARGENTINE FLAG HAD BEEN HOISTED FOR A PERIOD AFTER THE SHIP'S ARRIVAL AT LEITH. IT ALSO APPEARED CLEAR THAT FIREARMS HAD BEEN TAKEN ON SHORE IF ONLY FOR SHOOTING REINDEER.

5. FEARN TOLD MOLteni THAT, SINCE NEWS OF THE INCIDENT SEEMED CERTAIN TO LEAK IN DUE COURSE, WE INTENDED TO ISSUE A STATEMENT WHICH WOULD BE FACTUAL AND WHICH WOULD NOT EXAGGERATE THE CIRCUMSTANCES. COPY OF STATEMENT IN MY TELNO 37 WAS GIVEN TO MOLteni.

6. YOUR TELNO 43 NOW RECEIVED. GRATEFUL FOR EARLIEST POSSIBLE CONFIRMATION FROM BASE COMMANDER THAT ALL ARGENTINE PERSONNEL HAVE NOW LEFT LEITH.

7. ISSUE OF STATEMENT HAS LED TO CONSIDERABLE PRESS INTEREST AND PRESS MAY WELL SEEK TO PLAY THE INCIDENT UP. WE WILL UNATTRIBUTABLY BE MAKING CLEAR THAT THE AFFAIR SHOULD BE SEEN IN CONTEXT. THERE IS NO QUESTION OF AN ARGENTINE 'INVASION'. IT IS A MATTER OF A COMMERCIAL CONTRACTOR FAILING TO OBTAIN THE REQUIRED AUTHORISATION AND MAKING AN ILLEGAL LANDING. FOLLOWING OUR APPROACHES TO THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT, WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE SHIP AND PARTY HAVE NOW LEFT. WE HOPE THAT THE INCIDENT IS NOW OVER.

8. IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES, HMS ENDURANCE IS BEING INSTRUCTED TO RESUME HER NORMAL DUTIES, UNLESS BASE COMMANDER REPORTS A CONTINUED ARGENTINE PRESENCE AT LEITH.

CARRINGTON

NNNN

X

DISTRIBUTION  
STANDARD  
SAMd  
CABINET OFFICE

ADDITIONAL DIST  
FALKLAND ISLANDS

2

CONFIDENTIAL