

*M. Alexander*

CONFIDENTIAL

FM VENICE 131025Z JUN 80

TO FLASH FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 18 OF 13 JUNE

INFO IMMEDIATE VILA, PRIORITY MODUK (DS11), CANBERRA, WELLINGTON,  
WASHINGTON, UKMIS NEW YORK, SUVA, HONIARA, PORT MORESBY.

*A copy of this tel is also on:-*

*New Hebrides: Insurrection of Santo: Aug 79*

NEW HEBRIDES

1. THE PRIME MINISTER DISCUSSED THIS TODAY WITH THE FRENCH PRESIDENT. SHE MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE BRITISH TROOPS WOULD GO TO VILA AND URGED THAT A MATCHING CONTINGENT OF GENDARMES SHOULD BE SENT AGAIN FROM NOUMEA SO AS TO ENSURE THE GENUINELY JOINT CHARACTER OF THE FORCE.
2. PRESIDENT GISCARD RAISED NO OBJECTION TO THE DESPATCH TO VILA OF BRITISH TROOPS. BUT HE WAS RELUCTANT TO SEND A FRENCH CONTINGENT. HE CONTENDED THAT FRANCE ESCHewed THE USE OF MILITARY FORCE IN COLONIAL SITUATIONS. THE PRIME MINISTER CONTINUED TO ARGUE FOR THE DESPATCH OF A MATCHING FRENCH CONTINGENT. THE PRESIDENT DID NOT COMMENT ON THIS POINT, BUT URGED THAT THE BRITISH TROOPS SHOULD NOT IN FACT GET INVOLVED IN MILITARY ACTION AGAINST ANY OF THE ISLANDERS. THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT IT WAS NATURALLY OUR HOPE THAT THE PRESENCE OF THE TROOPS WOULD SUFFICE TO ENCOURAGE NEGOTIATIONS AND THAT THE USE OF FORCE WOULD NOT BE NECESSARY. THE DETERRENT EFFECT WOULD OF COURSE BE ENHANCED BY A FRENCH PRESENCE.
3. THE MATTER WAS LEFT ON THAT BASIS. IT WAS AGREED THAT MR BLAKER AND M. DIJOURD SHOULD MEET AT THE BEGINNING OF NEXT WEEK JOINTLY TO CONSIDER WHAT FURTHER ACTION MIGHT BE REQUIRED.
4. PLEASE SEE MIFT FOR LINE BEING TAKEN HERE WITH THE PRESS.

EILBECK