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PM/80/60

PRIME MINISTER

Go ahead  
A.T.

New Hebrides

1. Mr Blaker met his French counterpart, M. Dijoud, in Paris on Saturday 19 July.
2. They agreed that:
  - (a) independence should take place on 30 July, and issued a press statement to this effect;
  - (b) the New Hebrides Government should be pressed to improve their proposed Regional and Land Laws; and
  - (c) subject to your approval and that of President Giscard, British and French troops, acting jointly and using minimum force, should restore the Condominium and thus the authority of the central government to the island of Santo.
3. The two Ministers agreed that their two Representatives should return to the New Hebrides forthwith, to prepare the ground for (b) and (c).
4. I consider that a limited military action represents the only satisfactory course if we are to meet our obligations to grant independence to the New Hebrides with its territorial integrity intact. / The attached outline plan of the proposed operation was agreed between officials in Paris. Mr Blaker and M. Dijoud agreed to submit their proposal to Heads of Government today, and to telephone each other as soon as authority for the proposed operation had been given. In addition to the specific operation, the two Ministers agreed to seek authority to accept a limited commitment to maintain a joint military presence in the New Hebrides after independence should this prove necessary and be requested by the Independent Government.
5. The provision at paragraph 7(iii) of the agreed minute is not ideal, in that it will take away the element of surprise. However,

/M. Dijoud

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M. Dijoud made it a condition of French acceptance of the plan for joint action that the French Resident Commissioner, M. Robert, should go to Santo shortly before the landing, to do everything possible to avoid colon association with any possible resistance to the operation (and a consequent risk of French troops having to shoot at French citizens). If the colons can be neutralised through the intercession of M. Robert, there is a good chance that the reoccupation of Luganville will be totally unopposed. M. Robert will be accompanied by \* ~ ~ ~ \* a member of the French security service (DST) based in Vila, and by a British colleague (probably Mr Cooke, the Commander of the British Police Mobile Unit in the New Hebrides).

6. I recommend that Mr Blaker should be authorised to telephone M. Dijoud before close of play today to signify your agreement both to the proposed operation and to the maintenance of a joint military force in the New Hebrides after independence (for a limited and specified period of time to be agreed) should this prove necessary.

7. Francis Pym (to whom I am sending a copy) has been consulted and endorses this minute.

C  
/

(CARRINGTON)

Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
21 July 1980

\* ~ ~ \* Name deleted and retained  
under Section 3(4).

AWayland  
29 June 2010