

CONFIDENTIAL

Aw 040/325/12		
RECEIVED IN THE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE		
24 MAR 1982		
DESK OFFICER		REGISTRY
INDEX	PA	Action Taken

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), MODUX (NAVY) AND CINCFLEET

23
 YOUR TELNO 64 (ILLEGAL LANDING ON SOUTH GEORGIA) HAS, OF COURSE,
 23
 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 COMMUNI-
 CATING 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.

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

CONFIDENTIAL

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

STANDARD

S AM D

MAED

UND

ES & SD

SPD

CABINET OFFICE

2

CONFIDENTIAL