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DESKBY 25/0930Z

FM BUENOS AIRES 24/2340Z MAR 82

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 99 OF 24 MARCH 1982

INFO IMMEDIATE PORT STANLEY (PERSONAL FOR GOVERNOR), MODUK (NAVY)
AND CINCFLEET

MY TELNO 98 (NOT TO ALL): SOUTH GEORGIA

1. WHEN I EVENTUALLY SAW COSTA MENDEZ THIS EVENING AT 2230Z HE WAS LOOKING VERY EXHAUSTED AND SAID HE WAS HAVING GREAT DIFFICULTY, PARTICULARLY WITH THE NAVAL CINC OVER THE QUESTION OF DOING ANYTHING UNDER THE THREAT OF FORCE IMPLIED IN THE DEPLOYMENT OF HMS ENDURANCE. HE TOOK CONSIDERABLE COMFORT WHEN I POINTED OUT THAT ENDURANCE HAD BEEN SENT TO GRITVIKEN RATHER THAN LEITH AND ALL PUBLICITY ON HER WHEREABOUTS HAD BEEN WITHHELD PRECISELY TO AVOID ANY IMPRESSION OF SUCH PRESSURE. HE WAS ALSO ENCOURAGED WHEN I SAID THAT IT WAS NOT THE AIM OF HMG TO GET THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT TO ADMIT IT HAD DONE SOMETHING WRONG. I ADDED HOWEVER THAT I DID NOT SEE HOW WE COULD AVOID INSISTING THAT DAVIDOFF AND THE BUEN SUCESO HAD DONE WRONG WHICH COULD NOW ONLY BE PURGED BY THE MEN BEING TAKEN OFF VERY SOON.

2. COSTA MENDEZ ASKED FOR SUGGESTIONS HOW TO PROCEED. I SAID I HAD NO INSTRUCTIONS OR POWER TO NEGOTIATE. HOWEVER, IF THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT HAD DIFFICULTY OVER TAKING THE INITIATIVE OF EVACUATING THE MEN AT LEITH, COULD THEY NOT GET DAVIDOFF HIMSELF TO DO SO? COSTA MENDEZ CONFIDED THAT THERE WAS A SCIENTIFIC (NON-WARSHIP) VESSEL IN THE AREA WHICH COULD TAKE OFF THE MEN QUICKLY, PROVIDED A WAY OF GETTING IT SO ORDERED COULD BE DEvised. HE WAS FRANK TO ADMIT THAT HE COULD NOT GUARANTEE THAT HE COULD FIND A MEANS EVEN TO TRY TO PERSUADE DAVIDOFF TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY AS I SUGGESTED, IN VIEW OF THE RISK OF HIS THEN TELLING THE PRESS THAT THE MFA HAD PRESSURISED HIM. BUT HE WOULD TRY.

3. I SAID THAT I MEANWHILE WOULD TRY TO FIND OUT IF YOU COULD ALLOW HIM EG TILL THE END OF THE WEEK TO DEVISE SOME ALTERNATIVE TO HAVING THE MEN TAKEN OFF BY ENDURANCE. I WOULD ALSO ASK, AS HE URGED STRONGLY, IF SOME EXIT COULD NOT BE FOUND THROUGH INVOKING THE 1971 AND 1972 COMMUNICATIONS AGREEMENTS. WE AGREED TO MEET AGAIN AT 1400Z TOMORROW, BY WHEN I SHOULD BE GLAD OF ANY GUIDANCE YOU CAN GIVE ME.

WILLIAMS

STANDARD

SAMD

CABINET OFFICE

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