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SOUTH ATLANTIC PRESENTATION UNIT (SAPU)

Attached for information is the text of Sir A Parsons' speech in the Security Council on 2 June 1982.

Cabinet Office

3 June 1982

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SIR A PARSONS' SPEECH IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL ON 2 JUNE 1982

I PAY TRIBUTE ONCE AGAIN TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR THE EFFORTS HE HAS MADE DURING THE PAST FEW DAYS TO IMPLEMENT RESOLUTION 502 AND 505. THE FACT THAT IT HAS NOT PROVED POSSIBLE TO NEGOTIATE MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE TERMS FOR A CEASEFIRE IS NOT IN ANY WAY THE FAULT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL. HE HAS AGAIN DISPLAYED THE HIGHEST QUALITIES DEMANDED OF HIS OFFICE.

I HAVE SAID BEFORE, BUT IT CANNOT BE REPEATED TOO OFTEN, THAT THE CURRENT BREACH OF THE PEACE WAS CAUSED BY ARGENTINA. IT WAS ARGENTINA WHICH CLOSED THE DIPLOMATIC CHANNEL ON 1 APRIL. IT WAS ARGENTINA WHICH REMAINED SILENT IN THE FACE OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL'S APPEAL NOT TO USE FORCE LATER THAT SAME DAY AT THE TWO THOUSAND THREE HUNDRED AND FORTY-FIFTH MEETING OF THIS COUNCIL. IT WAS ARGENTINA WHICH THE NEXT MORNING INVADED THE FALKLAND ISLANDS. IT WAS AND IS ARGENTINA WHICH HAS FAILED TO COMPLY WITH RESOLUTION 502 WHICH DEMANDED THE IMMEDIATE WITHDRAWAL OF ALL ARGENTINE TROOPS. FAR FROM WITHDRAWING THEM, ARGENTINA REINFORCED THEM. IT IS THE UNITED KINGDOM WHICH WAS THE VICTIM OF THE ARGENTINE ACT OF AGGRESSION. IT IS THE FALKLAND ISLANDERS WHO HAVE BEEN VICTIMS OF THE ARGENTINE USE OF FORCE TO OCCUPY THE ISLANDS. I DO NOT PROPOSE NOW, MR

PRESIDENT, TO DWELL ON THE TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCES THE ISLANDERS HAVE SUFFERED OVER THE PAST TWO MONTHS. REPORTS SO FAR ARE NECESSARILY INCOMPLETE BUT FROM THOSE AREAS WHERE ISLANDERS HAVE BEEN ABLE TO TALK FREELY OF THEIR EXPERIENCES UNDER ARGENTINE OCCUPATION, SOME VERY SOMBRE AND DISTURBING FACTS ARE BEGINNING TO EMERGE.

I HAVE HAD OCCASION AT PREVIOUS MEETINGS OF THIS COUNCIL TO SET OUT THE UNITED KINGDOM'S POSITION IN DETAIL. I WILL NOT WEARY THE COUNCIL BY REPEATING ALL MY ARGUMENTS, WHICH, I BELIEVE, EFFECTIVELY REFUTED SOME OF THE MORE EXTRAVAGANT DISTORTIONS ADVANCED TODAY BY THE DISTINGUISHED REPRESENTATIVE OF ARGENTINA. I MUST REPEAT ONCE AGAIN THAT IT WAS ARGENTINA WHICH FIRST USED FORCE AND BEGAN THE PRESENT CRISIS. EVERYTHING WE HAVE DONE SINCE HAS BEEN IN EXERCISE OF OUR INHERENT RIGHT OF SELF-DEFENCE. WE HAVE NEVER ARGUED THAT THE UNITED KINGDOM WAS ASSUMING THE TASK OF EXECUTING THE MANDATE OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL. THE TRUE POSITION IS THAT IN THE FACE OF ARGENTINA'S FLAGRANT VIOLATION OF RESOLUTION 502, WE HAVE EXERCISED OUR RIGHT TO SELF-DEFENCE FOR WHICH NO MANDATE OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL IS REQUIRED BY THE TERMS OF THE CHARTER OF THE UNITED NATIONS. OUR OBJECTIVES HAVE BEEN CLEAR. AGGRESSION MUST NOT BE ALLOWED TO PAY. PEOPLES MUST NOT BE SUBJUGATED AGAINST THEIR WILL. PEOPLES MUST ENJOY THE RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION. POLITICAL PROBLEMS MUST NOT BE SETTLED BY ARMED FORCE. THESE ARE PRINCIPLES WHICH MY GOVERNMENT HAS NOT BEEN PREPARED TO COMPROMISE. THEY HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH "COLONIALISM" "IMPERIALISM" AND OUTWORN SHIBBOLETHS OF THAT KIND. WHAT CONCEIVABLE REASON COULD MY COUNTRY HAVE FOR WISHING TO ESTABLISH BRITISH OR OTHER MILITARY POWER IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC. IF WE HAD HAD SUCH EXTRAORDINARY PRETENTIONS, I SUGGEST TO THE COUNCIL THAT WE WOULD HAVE KEPT A LARGER GARRISON THAN 40 ROYAL MARINES ON THE FALKLANDS BEFORE THE ARGENTINE INVASION. WE HAVE DONE EVERYTHING IN OUR POWER, SHORT OF COMPROMISING THESE PRINCIPLES, TO BRING ABOUT THE PEACEFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CENTRAL ELEMENT SCR 502 - NAMELY UNCONDITIONAL ARGENTINE WITHDRAWAL FROM THE ISLANDS. THIS HAS NOT PROVED POSSIBLE AND WE HAVE BEEN LEFT WITH NO CHOICE BUT TO DEFEND THESE PRINCIPLES BY OTHER MEANS. WE HAVE NEVER BROKEN OFF OR INTERRUPTED NEGOTIATIONS. WE HAVE NEGOTIATED FULLY AND IN GOOD FAITH THROUGHOUT THIS LONG PERIOD.

I TURN NOW TO THE RECENT NEGOTIATIONS FOR A CEASEFIRE. THESE NEGOTIATIONS WERE HELD PURSUANT TO PARAGRAPH 4 OF RESOLUTION 505. AS MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL WILL RECALL, THIS RESOLUTION REAFFIRMED RESOLUTION 502 BY WHICH THE COUNCIL - AS LONG AGO NOW AS 3 APRIL - DEMANDED THE IMMEDIATE WITHDRAWAL OF ALL ARGENTINE FORCES FROM THE FALKLAND ISLANDS. THE UNITED KINGDOM'S POSITION WAS THAT IT WOULD WELCOME A CEASEFIRE WHICH WAS INSEPARABLY LINKED TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE WITHDRAWAL OF ARGENTINE FORCES AND TO THE COMPLETION OF THEIR WITHDRAWAL WITHIN A FIXED PERIOD. THIS POSITION WAS BASED SQUARELY ON RESOLUTION 502.

THE DISTINGUISHED REPRESENTATIVE OF ARGENTINA HAS SET OUT IN FULL THE RESPONSES OF HIS GOVERNMENT DURING THE PAST WEEK. I DO NOT INTEND TO FOLLOW HIM DOWN THAT PARTICULAR ROAD OF CONTROVERSY. THE SECRETARY GENERAL HAS MAINTAINED A UNIQUE CONFIDENTIALITY ABOUT THE NATURE OF HIS NEGOTIATIONS SINCE THE OUTSET AND EVEN IN THE FACE OF THE STATEMENT BY THE DISTINGUISHED REPRESENTATIVE OF ARGENTINA, I DO NOT INTEND TO BREACH THAT CONFIDENCE. I WOULD ONLY SAY THIS: THAT THE EXPLANATION BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF ARGENTINA MAKES CLEAR IN MY JUDGEMENT THAT IF ARGENTINE PRE-CONDITIONS HAD BEEN ACCEPTED, THEY WOULD HAVE LED US BACK INTO THE MORASS OF PROCRASTINATION AND EVASION WHICH MY GOVERNMENT HAS EXPERIENCED ON THE PART OF THE GOVERNMENT OF ARGENTINA OVER THE PAST TWO MONTHS OF EXTREMELY INTENSIVE NEGOTIATION. THE PLAIN FACT IS, MR PRESIDENT, THAT UNTIL THE GOVERNMENT OF ARGENTINA CHANGES ITS POSITION IT IS CLEAR THAT THE CONDITIONS FOR A CEASEFIRE DO NOT EXIST. AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND THE CALL BY THE DISTINGUISHED REPRESENTATIVES OF SPAIN AND PANAMA FOR AN UNCONDITIONAL CEASEFIRE IS NOT ACCEPTABLE TO MY DELEGATION. A CEASEFIRE WHICH IS NOT INSEPARABLY LINKED TO AN IMMEDIATE ARGENTINE WITHDRAWAL WOULD NOT BE CONSISTENT WITH RESOLUTION 502 BECAUSE THAT RESOLUTION DEMANDS THE IMMEDIATE WITHDRAWAL OF ALL ARGENTINE FORCES FROM THE FALKLAND ISLANDS. THE CALL FOR AN UNCONDITIONAL CEASEFIRE WOULD LEAVE ARGENTINE FORCES IN POSITION.

AS I INDICATED EARLIER, THE UNITED KINGDOM IS PERFECTLY PREPARED FOR A CEASEFIRE SO LONG AS IT IS INEXTRICABLY LINKED TO IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DEMAND IN RESOLUTION 502 FOR ARGENTINE WITHDRAWAL. WE HAVE NO WISH TO INFLICT OR SUFFER FURTHER CASUALTIES. WE ARE READY TO DISCUSS HONOURABLE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE DEPARTURE OF ARGENTINE FORCES IN ACCORDANCE WITH RESOLUTION 502. BUT THE COUNCIL'S

DEMAND FOR WITHDRAWAL MUST BE HEEDED. BECAUSE THE CALL FOR A CEASEFIRE CONTAINED IN THE DRAFT RESOLUTION READ OUT BY THE DISTINGUISHED REPRESENTATIVE OF SPAIN DOES NOT LINK THE CEASEFIRE WITH WITHDRAWAL, MY DELEGATION WILL BE OBLIGED TO OPPOSE IT.

A RESOLUTION BETTER FITTED TO THE NEEDS OF THE PRESENT SITUATION WOULD, I SUGGEST, CONTAIN THE FOLLOWING ELEMENTS:

1. A REAFFIRMATION OF RESOLUTIONS 502 AND 505, IN ALL THEIR PARTS.
2. AN EXPRESSION OF APPRECIATION TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR HIS CONTINUING EFFORTS TOWARDS PEACEMAKING.
3. A REITERATION OF THE DEMAND IN RESOLUTION 502 FOR ARGENTINE WITHDRAWAL.
4. A CALL FOR A CEASEFIRE, WHICH WOULD COME INTO EFFECT AS SOON AS WATERTIGHT ARRANGEMENTS EXISTED FOR ARGENTINE WITHDRAWAL WITHIN A FIXED PERIOD, IN DIGNITY AND ON AN HONOURABLE BASIS. THESE ARRANGEMENTS WOULD, AS A PRACTICAL MATTER, HAVE TO BE AGREED BETWEEN THE MILITARY COMMANDERS OF THE TWO SIDES IN THE ISLANDS.

THESE ARE THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF A CEASEFIRE RESOLUTION. I COMMEND THEM TO THE COUNCIL. MY DELEGATION COULD SUPPORT SUCH A RESOLUTION.

IN CONCLUSION, MR PRESIDENT, AT RISK OF REPEATING MYSELF, I WOULD LIKE TO EMPHASISE ONE THING: THE OBJECTIVE OF MY GOVERNMENT IS TO SET FREE THE PEOPLE OF THE FALKLAND ISLANDS FROM ARGENTINE OCCUPATION WHICH BY THEIR OWN DEMOCRATIC DECISION THEY NEVER, NEVER, WANTED. ALL WE WISH TO DO IS TO ENABLE THOSE PEOPLE TO RESUME THEIR PEACEFUL, HARMLESS AND INOFFENSIVE LIVES AND TO MAKE UP THEIR OWN MINDS, IN FREEDOM AND WITHOUT CONSTRAINT, REGARDING THEIR LONG TERM FUTURE. WHEN WE TALK ABOUT SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE FUTURE, WE ARE TALKING ABOUT SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS TO SHIELD THE ISLANDERS AGAINST ANY THREAT OF RENEWED AGGRESSION - THAT IS ALL.