

LLG 25φ  
FDW G 25/4

**FLASH**

Prime Minister

ZZ ATHENS

GRS 6φφ  
CONFIDENTIAL  
FM WASHINGTON φ4193φZ DEC 83  
TO FLASH ATHENS  
TELNO φφ2 OF 4 DEC 83  
AND TO FLASH FCO (FOR PS TO SECRETARY OF STATE AND PS TO PRIME MINISTER).

*We shall let you have a  
ref to the President  
message. A.S.C. 4/12*

FCO TELNO 555 TO YOU : ARGENTINA : US CERTIFICATION.

1. I AM WELL AWARE OF THE POLITICAL EMBARRASSMENT TO HMG OF THE US DECISION TO CERTIFY, EVEN THOUGH IT WAS NOT UNEXPECTED, AND EVEN MORE AWARE OF THE POLITICAL HARM TO BRITISH INTERESTS OF POSSIBLE FUTURE US ARMS SALES TO ARGENTINA. BUT I AM CONCERNED FOR THE BRITISH IMAGE IN THE UNITED STATES AND FOR OUR REPUTATION WITH THE US ADMINISTRATION UNLESS WE CHOOSE VERY CAREFULLY THE GROUNDS ON WHICH TO CONDUCT PRIVATE AND PUBLIC ROWS WITH THEM, PARTICULARLY IN THE AFTERMATH OF GRENADA.

2. I HAVE BEEN VERY STRUCK HOW DEEPLY OUR INABILITY TO SUPPORT THE UNITED STATES OVER GRENADA HAS PENETRATED BOTH PUBLIC CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE ADMINISTRATION AND CONGRESS HERE. IN SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS SINCE GRENADA FROM PITTSBURG TO SAN FRANCISCO AND BACK AGAIN VIA MILWAUKEE TO WASHINGTON THE QUESTION HAS BEEN PUT TO ME : "WE SUPPORTED YOU OVER THE FALKLANDS: WHY DIDN'T YOU SUPPORT US OVER GRENADA". THE ANSWER IS LISTENED TO WITH COURTESY BUT DOES NOT, IN THE VIEW OF THE MEDIA OR PUBLIC, CARRY CONVICTION. GRENADA, IN THE AMERICAN VIEW, WAS A GREAT SUCCESS : IT CLEARED OUT GRENADA AND IS GIVING SOVIETS, CUBANS AND THEIR SURROGATES ELSEWHERE PAUSE.

3. IT SEEMS TO ME THEREFORE, THAT UNLESS OUR RELATIONSHIP IS TO DETERIORATE MORE THAN IS DESIRABLE IN THE BRITISH INTEREST, WE SHOULD SPACE OUR ROWS AND ENGAGE IN THEM ONLY WHEN REAL AND IMPORTANT MATTERS OF SUBSTANCE ARE INVOLVED. I RECOMMEND THEREFORE THAT WE DO NOT ARGUE ABOUT THE FORM (CERTIFICATION), FOR WHICH WE SHALL FIND SYMPATHY AND UNDERSTANDING NEITHER WITH PUBLIC OPINION NOR WITH THE ADMINISTRATION NOR CONGRESS, BUT HOLD OUR FIRE FOR THE SUBSTANCE (ARMS SUPPLIES) FOR WHICH WE CAN EXPECT SUPPORT BOTH FROM OUR FRIENDS IN THE ADMINISTRATION (EG WEINBERGER) AND MORE WIDELY. TO PLAY THE HAND THIS WAY WILL IN FACT GIVE US MORE LEVERAGE WHEN WE REALLY NEED IT.

4. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, I HAVE ONE GENERAL AND SEVERAL PARTICULAR COMMENTS. THE GENERAL COMMENT CONCERNS THE TONE OF THE MESSAGE. IT IS COMMON GROUND, I TAKE IT, THAT WE WISH TO OBTAIN MAXIMUM RECEPTABILITY OF THE MESSAGE FROM THE PRIME MINISTER. SINCE, AS IS WELL KNOWN, THE PRESIDENT DOES NOT LIKE ROWS AND TENDS TO SWITCH OFF WHEN THE DECIBEL LEVEL IS TOO HIGH, I SUGGEST THE TONE OF THE MESSAGE SHOULD REFLECT THE FACT, WHICH IS UNDISPUTED, THAT BOTH THE PRESIDENT AND THE PRIME MINISTER HAVE A DIFFICULT POLITICAL PROBLEM ON THESE LAWS WHICH IT IS IN THEIR JOINT INTEREST TO MINIMISE SO THAT DOMESTIC POLITICAL PREOCCUPATIONS DO NOT SPILL OVER TO THEIR WIDER INTERESTS. THIS IS LARGELEY A QUESTION OF USING LANGUAGES AS BETWEEN FRIENDS.

5. AS FOR MY SPECIFIC POINTS THEY ARE :

(A) SECOND PARAGRAPH: DELETE QUOTE THE INCOMING GOVERNMENT THERE ARE NOT ONL NOT COMMITTED TO REDUCTIONS IN MILITARY SPENDING UNQUOTE.

(B) DELETE ALSO THE LAST SENTENCE OF THAT PARAGRAPH (IT SEEMS UNNECESSARY TO ARGUE THIS POINT, AND THE AMERICANS WOULD NOT ACCEPT IT).

(C) CONSIDER DELETING THE PASSAGE IN THE FOLLOWING PARAGRAPH: QUOTE IT WILL BE NECESSARY FOR ME TO EXPRESS PUBLICLY THE REGRET I AM NOW CONVEYING TO YOU UNQUOTE.

WRIGHT

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