

ADVANCE COPIES: FALKLAND ISLANDS

(X19)

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MR URE

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GR 350

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FM WASHINGTON 052258Z APR 82

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 1119 OF 5 APRIL 1982

AND TO IMMEDIATE MODUK

INFO IMMEDIATE UKMIS NEW YORK, GOVERNOR ASCENSION ISLAND

FALKLANDS

1. AT AN IMPROMPTU NEWS CONFERENCE IN HIS OFFICE PRESIDENT REAGAN SAID THAT THE CONFRONTATION BETWEEN BRITAIN AND ARGENTINA OVER THE FALKLANDS PUT THE UNITED STATES IN A VERY DIFFICULT POSITION BECAUSE IT WAS FRIENDLY WITH BOTH COUNTRIES. HE BELIEVED THE BRITISH AND ARGENTINE GOVERNMENTS WERE WILLING TO SEEK A DIPLOMATIC SOLUTION. HE HOPED THAT THEY WOULD BE ABLE TO DO SO WITH NO FORCEFUL ACTION OR BLOODSHED. QUOTE BOTH SIDES HAVE THREATENED THE USE OF FORCE, AS IS EVIDENCED BY ARGENTINA'S LANDING UNQUOTE. HE THOUGHT THEY WOULD BE WILLING TO MEET AND THE IDEA OF A PEACEFUL SOLUTION WOULD EMERGE. ASKED WHAT THE UNITED STATES WOULD DO IF BRITAIN SOUGHT TO RE-TAKE THE FALKLANDS BY FORCE, THE PRESIDENT CALLED THIS A

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2. THE STATE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN SAID THAT THE UNITED STATES WANTED TO BE AS HELPFUL AS IT COULD BUT IT WAS PREMATURE TO SPECULATE ABOUT MEDIATION EFFORTS. HE DECLINED TO SAY WHAT THE ADMINISTRATION WOULD DO IF HMG ASKED IT TO JOIN IN ECONOMIC SANCTIONS AGAINST ARGENTINA OR IF THE ARGENTINES INVOLVED THE RIO TREATY. HE SAID THERE WAS NO CHANGE IN THE ADMINISTRATION'S POSITION: THEY DEPLORED THE USE OF FORCE AND CALLED FOR THE END OF HOSTILITIES AND THE WITHDRAWAL OF ARGENTINE TROOPS.

3. ASKED ABOUT THE POSSIBLE USE BY BRITISH TASK FORCE AIRCRAFT OF THE US BASE ON ASCENSION ISLAND, THE SPOKESMAN SAID THAT BRITAIN HAD A LEGAL RIGHT TO LAND MILITARY PLANES AT THE AIRFIELD AFTER NOTIFYING THE US MILITARY COMMANDER. THIS WOULD NOT CONSTITUTE INVOLVEMENT IN THE DISPUTE. THE SPOKESMAN ADDED THAT THE UNITED STATES WOULD BE WILLING TO USE ITS GOOD OFFICES, WHILE MAKING CLEAR THAT HE WAS NOT USING THE TERM IN ANY FORMAL SENSE BUT MERELY TO INDICATE THAT THE UNITED STATES WAS IN CONTACT WITH BOTH PARTIES.

HENDERSON

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