

ADVANCE COPIES: FALKLAND ISLANDS

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TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NO 1195 OF 8 APRIL

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BOGOTA TEL NO 69: COLOMBIAN OAS INITIATIVE ON FALKLAND ISLANDS

1. ACTING ON A COLOMBIAN REQUEST, THE PERMANENT COUNCIL OF THE OAS MET TODAY IN WASHINGTON. AT THE SECRETARY-GENERAL'S INVITATION, CRABBIE ATTENDED AS AN UNOFFICIAL OBSERVER.

2. THE MEETING OPENED WITH A BOLIVIAN PROPOSAL THAT IT SHOULD IMMEDIATELY BE ADJOURNED. THERE FOLLOWED A PROCEDURAL WRANGLE AFTER WHICH IT WAS AGREED THAT THE THREE SPONSORS OF THE RESOLUTION (COLOMBIA, EQUADOR AND COSTA RICA) SHOULD MAKE PREPARED STATEMENTS AND THAT SUBSEQUENTLY A VOTE SHOULD BE TAKEN ON THE BOLIVIAN PROPOSAL.

3. COLOMBIA INTRODUCED ITS DRAFT RESOLUTION (TEXT IN MY IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING TELEGRAM - IT DIFFERS IN DETAIL FROM THAT CONTAINED IN SAN JOSE TEL NO 102). COLOMBIA CLAIMED THAT WAR THREATENED THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE AND THAT THE OAS COULD NOT STAND IDLY BY IN FACE OF SUCH A DANGER. COLOMBIA'S BASIC POSITION WAS THAT DISPUTES SHOULD BE RESOLVED BY PEACEFUL AND LEGAL MEANS, AND THIS WAS THE PURPOSE OF THE RESOLUTION BEFORE THE PERMANENT COUNCIL.

4. EQUADOR SAID THAT ALTHOUGH IT SUPPORTED ARGENTINA'S CLAIM TO SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE FALKLAND ISLANDS, IT WAS ALSO COMMITTED TO THE PEACEFUL RESOLUTION OF DISPUTES. THE EMANCIPATION OF LATIN AMERICA

4. EQUADOR SAID THAT ALTHOUGH IT SUPPORTED ARGENTINA'S CLAIM TO SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE FALKLAND ISLANDS, IT WAS ALSO COMMITTED TO THE PEACEFUL RESOLUTION OF DISPUTES. THE EMANCIPATION OF LATIN AMERICA WOULD REMAIN INCOMPLETE AS LONG AS THERE WERE COLONIES IN THE REGION. EQUADOR SUPPORTED THE RESOLUTION AS A MEANS OF PEACEFULLY RESOLVING THE ANACHRONISM OF A COLONIAL PRESENCE IN THE FALKLAND ISLANDS.

5. COSTA RICA EXPRESSED GRAVE CONCERN THAT A QUOTE WARLIKE FLEET UNQUOTE SHOULD BE HEADING FOR LATIN AMERICA. THE CONTINENT COULD NOT SIT WITH ITS ARMS FOLDED IN FACE OF SUCH A THREAT. TWO NOBLE NATIONS HAD AN UNDERSTANDABLE DISPUTE, AND THE OAS HAD A RESPONSIBILITY TO AVERT THE POSSIBILITY OF A THIRD WORLD WAR. COSTA RICA PROPOSED THAT A PEACE KEEPING FORCE SHOULD BE ASSEMBLED TO REPLACE THE ARGENTINES.

6. THE THREE SPONSORS OF THE RESOLUTION THEN AGREED TO REMIT THE ACTUAL TEXT TO A WORKING GROUP: THIS WAS DESIGNED TO HEAD OFF THE CONTINUING BOLIVIAN INSISTENCE ON IMMEDIATELY ADJOURNING THE PERMANENT COUNCIL. BOLIVIA CLAIMED THAT AN OAS INITIATIVE NOW WOULD CUT ACROSS THE QUOTE MEDIATION UNQUOTE EFFORTS OF HAIG IN LONDON AND BUENOS AIRES. BOLIVIA THEREFORE PROPOSED THAT THE MEETING SHOULD BE ADJOURNED UNTIL MONDAY, WHEN IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO SEE WHAT PROGRESS MR HAIG WAS MAKING WITH HIS INITIATIVE.

7. AFTER FURTHER PROCEDURAL DISCUSSION, THIS ADJOURNMENT WAS AGREED BY A HEAVY MAJORITY. AMONG THOSE SUPPORTING THE ADJOURNMENT WERE THE UNITED STATES, BRAZIL, CHILE AND PARAGUAY.

8. IN COMMENTS TO THE PRESS AFTER THE MEETING, WE NOTED THAT THE FRAMEWORK FOR AN AGREEMENT WAS ALREADY IN PLACE IN THE TERMS OF UN SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION NO 502. IT WAS NOT FOR US TO COMMENT ON THE DETAILS OF THE OAS DEBATE. HOWEVER WE HOPED THAT ARGENTINA'S FRIENDS WOULD PERSUADE HER THAT BRITAIN WAS SERIOUSLY AND UNFLINCHINGLY COMMITTED TO REASSERTING HER SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE ISLANDS AND THAT ACCORDINGLY ARGENTINA SHOULD WITHDRAW HER TROOPS IMMEDIATELY.

9. COMMENT: THIS WAS A MOST SATISFACTORY OUTCOME FROM OUR POINT OF VIEW. WE DID WHAT WE COULD BEHIND THE SCENES TO ENCOURAGE ADJOURNMENT.

HENDERSON