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Awkward

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FM GEORGETOWN 201445Z APR 82

TO PRIORITY FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 67 OF 20 APRIL

PRIORITY INFO FOR MODUK, KINSTON (FOR DA), ROUTINE CARACAS
SAVING FOR INFO PORT OF SPAIN, BRIDGETOWN (PASSED LOCALLY)ARMS SALES TO GUYANA

1. GUYANESE CHIEF OF STAFF BRIGADIER MCLEAN ASKED ME TO CALL URGENTLY YESTERDAY. FORCE COMMANDER COLONEL GRANGER WAS ALSO PRESENT. MCLEAN SAID THAT HE WISHED TO ALERT US TO A SERIOUS SITUATION AND TO MAKE A SMALL REQUEST.
2. I WAS THEN SUBJECTED TO A PRESENTATION BRINGING OUT SEVEN POINTS, NONE OF THEM NEW, WHICH INDICATED TO THE GUYANESE THE LIKELIHOOD OF VENEZUELAN AGGRESSION:-
 - (A) ACTS OF ECONOMIC AGGRESSION (EG VENEZUELAN OPPOSITION TO THE UPPER MAZARUNI SCHEME)
 - (B) SYSTEMATIC VIOLATION OF AIR SPACE, IN PARTICULAR THE SORTIE OF A CANBERRA OVER TIMEHRI ETC ON 15 SEPTEMBER 1981. GRANGER ADMITTED THAT RECENTLY THERE HAD ONLY BEEN INCURSIONS OVER THE NORTH WEST SEMICOLON
 - (C) HYSTERICAL PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN IN VENEZUELAN PRESS. MCLEAN HANDED ME AN ARTICLE FROM DIARIO DE CARACAS OF 26 NOVEMBER 1981 SEMICOLON
 - (D) AQUISITION OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT ESPECIALLY SMALL LANDING CRAFT FROM THE US. (THE PRESENTATION ALSO SHOWED F16'S AND HAWKS, BUT THESE WERE PLAYED DOWN FOR MY BENEFIT)
 - (E) REFUSAL TO RENEW PORT OF SPAIN PROTOCOL
 - (F) REACTIVATION OF TWO JUNGLE BRIGADES
 - (G) THE DRAWING UP OF OPERATION MARK 1 PLAN CARABOBO. IT WAS PERHAPS SIGNIFICANT THAT THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF CARABOBO WAS ON 24 JUNE JUST AFTER THE PORT OF SPAIN PROTOCOL EXPIRED. MCLEAN SAID THAT EVENTS IN THE FALKLANDS WOULD HAVE ENCOURAGED VENEZUELA TO ENFORCE ITS CLAIM BY OCCUPATION AND THEN TRY TO NEGOTIATE FROM STRENGTH. I SAID THAT IT REMAINETTO BE SEEN WHAT WOULD HAPPEN OVER THE FALKLANDS. IT MIGHT GIVE THE VENEZUELAN PAUSE. BUT HE POINTED OUT THAT GUYANA HAD NO FLEET TO COME TO HER RESCUE.
3. MCLEAN THEN SHOWED ME A COPY OF A CIRCULAR D/SALES(S)4/51/410 /1/1/2 DATED 8.2.82 AND SIGNED BEF G SELCH OFFERING SOME SURPLUS 20 MILLIMETRE OERLIKON GUNS AND ASSOCIATED EQUIPMENT FOR SALE AT £35,605. HIS SMALL REQUEST WAS THAT THE GDF BE SUPPLIED WITH THESE GUNS WHICH WERE COMPATIBLE WITH THOSE ON THE BRITISH-MADE PATROL PECCARI. COULD WE OFFER EASY TERMS OR PERHAPS A GRANT? I PROMISED TO REPORT TO YOU.
4. IN FURTHER TALK GRANGER SAID THAT THE GDP NEEDED ADVICE ON PLANNING, INTELLIGENCE AND TRAINING TO MEET THE VENEZUELAN THREAT AND HAD BEEN WONDERING WHETHER TO INVITE A HIGH LEVEL TEAM FROM MOD FOR THIS PURPOSE. I SAID THAT WE WERE ALWAYS GLAD TO GIVE ADVICE AND HELP TO THE GDF, AND HAD DONE SO EVER SINCE INDEPENDENCE;

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BUT IN VIEW OF THE TERMINATION OF THE PORT OF SPAIN PROTOCOL AND OF DISCUSSION WHICH WE HOPED WOULD FOLLOW UNDER THE GENEVA AGREEMENT, THIS DID NOT SEEM TO ME THE RIGHT TIME FOR AN OSTENTATIOUS BRITISH MILITARY VISIT. BUT MY DA, COLONEL HOLLOWAY WAS COMING HERE IN EARLY MAY, AND GRANGER COULD PUT ANY DETAILED REQUESTS TO HIM.

5. I JUDGE THAT MCLEAN (PARA 3 ABOVE) WAS SPEAKING ON PRESIDENT BURNHAM'S INSTRUCTIONS, BUT THAT GRANGER (PARA 4 ABOVE) WAS NOT. OUR REFUSAL TO SELL SECONDHAND ARMOURD CARS TO GUYANA IN EARLY 1960 STILL RANKLES, AND BURNHAM MAY BLAME ME PERSONALLY FOR THE DECISION. THE PRESENT REQUEST TO BUY GUNS IS A TEST OF BRITISH WILLINGNESS TO SUPPORT GUYANA WHEN RIGHTLY OR WRONGLY SHE FEELS THREATENED, AND INDEED OF OUR POLITICAL RELATIONSHIP AS A WHOLE. IF WE PASS THE TEST, WE MAY GET FURTHER REQUESTS. IF WE DO NOT, THE CONCLUSION MAY BE DRAWN BY GDF OFFICERS AS WELL AS BY BURNHAM THAT THEY CANNOT RELY ON US AND MUST TURN ELSEWHERE.

6. I STRONGLY RECOMMEND THAT WE AGREE IN PRINCIPLE TO SELL THESE GUNS TO GUYANA SEMICOLON AND FURTHER THAT WE OFFER EASY TERMS IN THE BRITISH NATIONAL INTEREST (SINCE GUYANA'S PRESENT ECONOMIC SITUATION DOES NOT INSPIRE CONFIDENCE THAT PAYMENTS WILL BE MADE ON TIME). THE GUNS THEMSELVES ARE DEFENSIVE IN CHARACTER, NOT SUITABLE FOR INTERNAL REPRESSION. THE VENEZUELAN CAN HARDLY COMPLAIN WHEN THEY ARE BUYING HAWKS FROM US. GUYANA IS GIVING FORTHRIGHT SUPPORT TO THE BRITISH OVER FALKLANDS AND THIS IS USEFUL TO US WITHIN THE COMMONWEALTH, THE UN AND THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT. AGREEING TO SELL THE GUNS WILL NOT COMMIT US TO ANY FURTHER SALES OR SUPPORT, THOUGH AS I HAVE POINTED OUT ABOVE FURTHER REQUESTS COULD FOLLOW. IF GUYANA FEELS SHE CANNOT TURN TO US FOR ARMS AND FOR ADVICE SHE MAY TURN ELSEWHERE TO OUR DISADVANTAGE.

7. PLEASE INSTRUCT SOON.

MALLET

LIMITED
MCAD
DEF D
SAM D
WIAD
ACDD
NAD
PS
PS/MRONLOW
PS/MRHURD
PS/PUS
MR GIFFARD
MR URE

THIS TELEGRAM
WAS NOT
ADVANCED