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OO BONN DESKBY 251700Z

GRS 1005

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DESKBY 251700Z

FM FCO 251600Z MAY 1982

TO IMMEDIATE BONN

TELEGRAM NUMBER 244 OF 25 MAY

INFO IMMEDIATE UKDEL NATO, MODUK (DS6, 7, 11 AND 12)

TELECON PEARCE/HUNTER: FALKLAND ISLANDS: DEPLOYMENT OF BLOW-PIPE BATTERY FROM BAOR

1. AS DISCUSSED IN TELECON UNDER REFERENCE, MINISTERS HAVE DECIDED TO DEPLOY AN ADDITIONAL BLOW-PIPE BATTERY TO THE SOUTH ATLANTIC. WE UNDERSTAND THAT A REPORT TO THIS EFFECT HAS APPEARED IN THE GERMAN PRESS. WE SHOULD BE GRATEFUL IF YOU COULD INFORM THE AUSWAERTIGES AMT AND THE FEDERAL MOD OF OUR DECISION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AT THE LEVEL YOU CONSIDER MOST APPROPRIATE, DRAWING ON THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

(A) AS A RESULT OF THE NEED TO ENHANCE THE LOW LEVEL AIR DEFENCE CAPABILITIES AVAILABLE TO BRITISH FORCES IN THE FALKLAND ISLANDS: WE HAVE DECIDED TO REDEPLOY ONE BLOW-PIPE BATTERY (24 FIRE UNITS) FROM BAOR TO THE SOUTH ATLANTIC:

(B) THE UNIT CONCERNED IS 21 AIR DEFENCE BATTERY OF 27 FIELD REGIMENT, WHICH IS BEING RECATEGORISED AT NATO A4 STATUS UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE. NATO AUTHORITIES ARE BEING INFORMED. TOTAL NUMBER OF MEN INVOLVED IS 60:

(C) WE REGRET THE NEED TO WITHDRAW THIS UNIT FROM BAOR, BUT RECENT EVENTS DEMONSTRATE THE NEED TO ENSURE THAT OUR FORCES ON THE FALKLANDS ARE PROVIDED WITH ADEQUATE AIR DEFENCE. WE HAVE BEEN OBLIGED TO WITHDRAW A UNIT FROM BAOR BECAUSE WE HAVE NO SUITABLE UNITS AVAILABLE IN THE UK (THIS INFORMATION IS PARTICULARLY SENSITIVE AND SHOULD BE TREATED IN THE STRICTEST CONFIDENCE) UNFORTUNATELY THERE IS NOTHING WE CAN DO TO PLUG THE GAP. HOWEVER, WE BELIEVE THAT THE SMALL OPERATIONAL RISK CREATED BY THE TEMPORARY REMOVAL OF THE BATTERY IS JUSTIFIED IN THE

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CIRCUMSTANCES. THREE BLOW-PIPE BATTERIES REMAIN IN 1 (BR) CORPS.

(D) NO FURTHER WITHDRAWALS OF BLOW-PIPE ARE CURRENTLY UNDER CONSIDERATION, BUT CLEARLY WE CANNOT (REPEAT NOT) GIVE ANY CATEGORIC ASSURANCES THAT THIS WILL REMAIN THE CASE. WE WILL, HOWEVER, DO ALL WE CAN TO ENSURE THAT THE GERMAN AUTHORITIES ARE KEPT AS FULLY INFORMED AS POSSIBLE. MEANWHILE WE INTEND TO RESTORE 21 AIR DEFENCE BATTERY AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, BUT WE CANNOT JUDGE AT PRESENT WHEN THAT MIGHT BE:

(E) THESE REDUCTIONS WILL NOT RESULT IN BAOR FALLING BELOW THE LEVEL OF OUR BRUSSELS TREATY COMMITMENT OF 55,000. THE ONLY OTHER WITHDRAWALS FROM BFG TO DATE HAVE BEEN 4 ELECTRONIC WARFARE SPECIALISTS AND 12 ROYAL ENGINEER SPECIALISTS AS WELL AS THE RAF RAPIER UNIT (FCO TELNO 230) TOTALLING 133 MEN. MOD ARE ALSO CONSIDERING THE POSSIBILITY OF DEPLOYING UP TO 70 SIGNALLERS FROM BAOR TO THE SOUTH ATLANTIC. NO OTHER DEPLOYMENTS ARE CURRENTLY ANTICIPATED. FOR THE SAME REASON AS SET OUT IN (D) ABOVE, HOWEVER, WE CANNOT (REPEAT NOT) GIVE A CATEGORICAL ASSURANCE THAT THIS WILL NECESSARILY REMAIN THE CASE. YOU SHOULD AVOID GIVING ANY SUCH IMPRESSION OR BEING DRAWN INTO DISCUSSION ABOUT THIS.

2. PLEASE EMPHASISE TO THE GERMANS THE SENSITIVITY OF THIS INFORMATION, PARTICULARLY THE SECOND SENTENCE OF PARA 1(C), THE FIRST SENTENCE OF PARA 1(D) AND PARA 1(E). WE ARE DOING WHAT WE CAN TO KEEP THE GERMANS FULLY INFORMED, BUT CLEARLY WE NEED TO BE CONFIDENT THAT NO SENSITIVE INFORMATION REACHES UNAUTHORISED, PARTICULARLY ARGENTINE, EARS. THE INFORMATION WE ARE PASSING TO NATO AUTHORITIES WILL NOT BE AS FULL.

3. MOD WILL NOT BE ANNOUNCING THE BLOW-PIPE DEPLOYMENT TO THE PRESS BUT WILL TAKE THE FOLLOWING LINE IF ASKED:

'THE GOVERNMENT HAVE DECIDED TO STRENGTHEN THE AIR DEFENCE CAPABILITY AVAILABLE TO COMMANDER LAND FORCES FALKLANDS BY REDEPLOYING A BLOW-PIPE BATTERY FROM BAOR TO THE SOUTH ATLANTIC.'  
THE MOD HAVE PREPARED THE FOLLOWING SUPPLEMENTARY POINTS FOR DEFENSIVE USE:

'QUESTION: HAVE OUR NATO ALLIES BEEN CONSULTED ABOUT THIS?

ANSWER: NATO ALLIES ARE BEING INFORMED THAT THIS UNIT WILL

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REMAIN AVAILABLE TO NATO. BECAUSE OF ITS DISTANCE FROM THE ALLIANCE AREA, HOWEVER, IT HAS BEEN DECLARED TO BE AT A LOWER AVAILABILITY STATUS THAN WOULD NORMALLY BE THE CASE. THIS IS STANDARD PRACTICE FOR DEPLOYMENT OUTSIDE THE NATO AREA.

QUESTION: WHY SEND A UNIT FROM BAOR? DON'T WE HAVE SUFFICIENT ASSETS IN UKLF TO LEND SUPPORT?

ANSWER: I CANNOT COMMENT ABOUT OPERATIONAL PLANS.

QUESTION: WILL TA BLOW-PIPE UNITS BE CALLED UP TO FILL THE GAP IN BAOR?

ANSWER: NO.

QUESTION: WHAT EFFECT DOES THIS WITHDRAWAL HAVE UPON BAOR'S OPERATIONAL CAPABILITY?

ANSWER: SUBSTANTIAL AIR DEFENCE FORCES REMAIN IN BAOR. (IF PRESSED) I CANNOT COMMENT ABOUT OPERATIONAL PLANS.

QUESTION: WHY WAS NOT THIS BATTERY DEPLOYED EARLIER? HAVE YOU IDENTIFIED A NEW AIR THREAT? HOW MANY MEN/LAUNCHERS/MISSILES ARE INVOLVED? HOW WILL THEY MOVE TO THE FALKLANDS? WHEN WILL THEY ARRIVE?

ANSWER: IT WOULD NOT BE RIGHT FOR ME TO REVEAL DETAILS ABOUT OUR OPERATIONAL PLANS.'

WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE GERMAN PRESS HAVE ACQUIRED FURTHER DETAILS PROBABLY IDENTIFYING THE UNIT AND NUMBER OF MEN CONCERNED. WE GATHER THAT THE COMMANDER 1 (BR) CORPS IS DUE TO HOLD A RECEPTION FOR THE GERMAN PRESS THIS EVENING. IF ASKED HE WILL CONFIRM THE CORRECTNESS OF THESE DETAILS, BUT WILL OTHERWISE FOLLOW THE PRESS LINE ABOVE.

4. WE SUGGEST THAT FMOD OFFICIALS MIGHT DRAW ON THIS PRESS LINE IF ASKED ABOUT THE BLOW-PIPE DEPLOYMENT BY THE BUNDESTAG DEFENCE COMMITTEE TOMORROW. THEY SHOULD NOT (REPEAT NOT) REVEAL ANY OF THE MORE SENSITIVE INFORMATION IN PARA 1 TO THE COMMITTEE. MORE GENERALLY, WE SHOULD LIKE FMOD TO MAKE THE FOLLOWING POINTS TO THE COMMITTEE SHOULD THE LATTER ASK ABOUT THE EFFECT OF OUR SOUTH ATLANTIC DEPLOYMENTS ON NATO:

(A) THE GERMAN AUTHORITIES ARE BEING KEPT FULLY INFORMED BY THE UK ABOUT THE EFFECT ON NATO DEPLOYMENTS OF BRITISH OPERATIONS IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC, BUT CLEARLY THEY CANNOT REVEAL THE

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DETAILS:

(B) THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT FULLY UNDERSTANDS THE REASONS WHY THE UK IS TAKING ACTION IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC: THEY ARE RELEVANT TO THE MAINTENANCE OF DETERRENCE IN EUROPE:

(C) UK FORCES CONCERNED REMAIN AVAILABLE TO NATO, ALTHOUGH OBVIOUSLY AT A LOWER LEVEL OF AVAILABILITY:

(D) THEY ARE CONFIDENT THAT BFG REMAIN FULLY ABLE TO FULFILL THEIR OPERATIONAL ROLE.

5. THIS TELEGRAM IS BEING SENT TO UKDEL NATO FOR THEIR OWN INFORMATION ONLY.

MOD ARE TELEGRAPHING SEPARATELY WITH INSTRUCTIONS FOR NOTIFYING THE NATO AUTHORITIES.

PYM

FALKLANDS SELECTIVE [COPIES SENT TO NO 10 DOWNING STREET]  
LIMITED

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HD/S AM D

HD/PLANNING STAFF

HD/UND

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