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RR UKMIS NEW YORK

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CONFIDENTIAL

FM WASHINGTON 301950Z MAY 82

TO IMMEDIATE F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 1969 OF 30 MAY

INFO UKMIS NEW YORK

30 MAY 1982

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MY TELNO 1963: FALKLANDS: U S ASSISTANCE

1. WHEN I SAW HAIG YESTERDAY THE QUESTION AROSE WHETHER THE U S MIGHT BE ABLE TO PROVIDE FOOD AND MEDICINES FOR ARGENTINE PRISONERS OF WAR ON THE FALKLANDS AS WELL AS HELP WITH REPATRIATION ONCE THE FIGHTING WAS OVER. HAIG MAY SEE THIS AS A MEANS OF GIVING US PRACTICAL ASSISTANCE AND MENDING FENCES WITH THE ARGENTINIANS AT THE SAME TIME.
2. WE HAVE NOW LEARNED FROM THE PANTAGON THAT, AT HAIG'S REQUEST, THEY HAVE WORKED OVERNIGHT ON A DETAILED PAPER SETTING OUT WHAT MIGHT BE INVOLVED. THIS PAPER HAS NOW GONE TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT AND I WOULD EXPECT HAIG TO RAISE THE SUBJECT AGAIN WITH ME SOON. THE PENTAGON HAVE TOLD OUR DEFENCE STAFF THAT THEIR PREPARATORY WORK IS BEING CONFINED TO A SMALL CIRCLE AROUND WEINBERGER, PRESUMABLY BECAUSE THEY DO NOT WANT THE ARGENTINIANS TO KNOW THAT THE U S IS THINKING ABOUT WHAT SHOULD HAPPEN IN THE EVENT OF THEIR DEFEAT.
3. ~~THE PENTAGON ARE NOT PREAPRED TO GO INTO DETAIL AT THIS STAGE.~~

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PRESUMABLY BECAUSE THEY DO NOT WANT THE ARGENTINIANS TO KNOW THAT
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THEIR DEFEAT.~~

3. THE PENTAGON ARE NOT PREAPRED TO GO INTO DETAIL AT THIS STAGE. THEY DID, HOWEVER, MAKE IT CLEAR THAT THE U S WAS KEEN TO HELP ALTHOUGH, FORMALLY SPEAKING, THEY COULD ONLY GET INVOLVED IF WE WERE TO ASK. THEY ARE NOT THINKING OF OFFERING HELP WITH THE PRISONERS WE HAVE JUST TAKEN BUT ARE LOOKING AHEAD TO THE PROBLEM WE WOULD FACE IF WE HAD 10,000 PRISONERS ON OUR HANDS. THEIR PLANNING APPEARS TO COVER IMMEDIATE FOOD AND MEDICAL CARE WHICH COULD BE FLOWN IN, AS WELL AS LATER ARRANGEMENTS TO SHIP THE PRISONERS BACK TO ARGENTINA. THE PENTAGON MADE IT CLEAR THAT, IN THE SECOND STAGE, THE U S WOULD NOT WISH TO OPERATE ON ITS OWN, BUT AS PART OF SOME INTERNATIONAL ARRANGEMENT CONCEIVABLY ALSO INVOLVING BRAZIL. THE ICRC WOULD ALSO NEED TO GIVE ITS BLESSING. THE PENTAGON CLEARLY ENVISAGED THAT, EVEN IF BRAZIL WERE INVOLVED, THE U S WOULD BEAR THE BRUNT OF THE OPERATION BUT BRAZILIAN PARTICIPATION WOULD MAKE THE U.S ROLE MORE ACCEPTABLE TO ARNENTINA AND THE OTHER LATIN AMERICANS. THE AMERICANS MAY ALSO SEE THIS AS A RELATIVELY LOW-KEY WAY OF INTRODUCING AN INTERNATIONAL ELEMENT INTO THE SITUATION FOLLOWING AN ARGENTINE COLLAPSE.

4. I SHOULD EMPHASISE THAT THE AMERICANS HAVE AS YET MADE NO FORMAL APPROACH TO US AND THE STATE DEPARTMENT/PENTAGON PAPER ON WHAT WOULD BE INVOLVED WILL ONLY JUST HAVE BEEN PUT TO HAIG.

HENDERSON

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