

OO MODUK

OO CINCFLEET

GRS 300

116 JUL 1982
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CONFIDENTIAL

FM SANTIAGO 162201Z JUN 82

TO FLASH FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 302 OF 16 JUNE 1982

INFO IMMEDIATE BERNE, UKMIS GENEVA, BRASILIA, MONTEVIDEO, MODUK
AND CINCLFEET

YOUR TELEGRAM NO 270.

REPATRIATION OF POWS.

1. COVARRUBIAS INFORMED ME AT 16202ZZ THAT HE HAD MADE ENQUIRIES ABOUT OUR PROPOSAL IN BUENOS AIRES AND CONSULTED WITH PINOCHET THE ATTITUDE OF THE ARGENTINE AUTHORITIES WAS THAT THERE WAS A WORKABLE AND WELL-ESTABLISHED CHANNEL FOR REPATRIATION OF PRISONERS THROUGH MONTEVIDEO AND THAT THEY WERE NOT PREPARED TO CHANGE THIS. THE CHILEAN GOVERNMENT THEREFORE HAD NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO ACCEPT THE ARGENTINE VIEW AND THEY COULD NOT TAKE UP OUR PROPOSAL TO USE PUNTA ARENAS. COVARRUBIAS ALSO SAID THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE ARRANGEMENTS IN MONTEVIDEO INVOLVED THE ICRC WHICH WAS ALSO SATISFACTORY TO THE ARGENTINES.
2. WHEN COVARRUBIAS SPOKE TO ME I HAD NOT SEEN YOUR TELNO 369 TO MONTEVIDEO STATING THAT THE CANBERRA COULD NOT ENTER PORT THERE. I HAVE SINCE TOLD HIM THIS AND PRESSED HIM HARD TO RE-CONSIDER, PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF THE LATEST INFORMATION ABOUT THE VERY SERIOUS CONDITION OF THE ARGENTINE POWS ON THE ISLANDS AND THE LONGER STEAMING TIME WHICH WOULD BE REQUIRED TO SEND THEM TO MONTEVIDEO IN ANY CASE.
3. COVARRUBIAS REPEATED THAT CHILE WAS VERY WILLING TO HELP IN THIS WAY IF ARGENTINA AGREED BUT THAT, AS A THIRD PARTY IN THE MATTER THEY DID NOT FEEL THEY SHOULD BE ASKED TO NEGOTIATE SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT. SURELY IT WAS FOR BRITAIN, THROUGH THE SWISS, TO ARRANGE THE REPATRIATION OF ARGENTINE PRISONERS GJES. I COULD NOT SHIFT HIM FROM THIS VIEW. HE DID, HOWEVER, AGREE TO INSTRUCT THE CHILEAN AMBASSADOR IN BUENOS AIRES TO CONTACT THE SWISS THERE AND EXPLAIN THAT CHILE WAS PREPARED TO ALLOW REPATRIATION THROUGH PUNTA ARENAS IF THE SWISS WERE ABLE TO PERSUADE ARGENTINA TO AGREE.

HICKMAN