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ARGENTINA. JD



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

4 October 1982

BF

FALKLANDS AT THE UN

The Prime Minister saw Canberra telegram No. 424 over the weekend. She has expressed considerable surprise at the attitude adopted by the Permanent Secretary at the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs towards the forthcoming debate on the Falklands in the UN General Assembly. Mrs. Thatcher has asked whether she can usefully take the matter up with the Australian Prime Minister. I should be grateful for early advice on this point.

A. J. COLES

John Holmes, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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FM CANBERRA 010545Z OCT 82

TO PRIORITY FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 424 OF 1 OCTOBER

INFO PRIORITY UKMIS NEW YORK

*I am
embarrassed - can't
do any more with
France?*

FALKLANDS AT THE UN

1. WE ARE IN DANGER OF LOSING AUSTRALIAN SUPPORT FOR OUR POSITION ON NEGOTIATION WITH ARGENTINA OVER THE FALKLANDS UNLESS WE CAN SPELL OUT TO THEM WITH UTMOST CLARITY THE REASONS FOR OUR POSITION.

2. THIS MESSAGE WAS CONVEYED IN TERMS TO MR PATRICK WRIGHT (IN CANBERRA FOR TRI-NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE MEETING) WHEN HEAD OF CHANCERY TOOK HIM YESTERDAY TO CALL ON PETER HENDERSON, PERMANENT SECRETARY AT THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

3. MR WRIGHT REHEARSED THE LOGIC OF THE BRITISH POSITION ALONG FAMILIAR LINES, STRESSING THE UNACCEPTABILITY OF OUR AGREEING TO NEGOTIATE SO SOON AFTER ARGENTINA HAD HERSELF DELIBERATELY BROKEN OFF NEGOTIATIONS AND INVADED THE FALKLANDS. BRITISH PUBLIC OPINION WAS CLEARLY ALSO AN IMPORTANT FACTOR.

4. HENDERSON REJOINED THAT COOL LOGIC WAS NOT ENOUGH. IT WAS A MATTER OF PERCEPTIONS. THE FACT OF ARGENTINE AGGRESSION HAD BEEN COMPLETELY CLEAR-CUT AS HAD AUSTRALIA'S SUBSEQUENT SUPPORT FOR THE SOUTH ATLANTIC OPERATION. BUT A CALL FOR THE PARTIES TO NEGOTIATE WAS A DIFFERENT MATTER. IF A RESOLUTION WERE PERCEIVED BY FAIR-MINDED AND REASONABLE PEOPLE TO BE A FAIRMINDED AND REASONABLE PROPOSAL, AND ALWAYS SUPPOSING THAT IT DID NOT CONTAIN OTHER ELEMENTS TO WHICH AUSTRALIA MIGHT TAKE EXCEPTION, SHE WOULD FIND IT VERY DIFFICULT TO VOTE AGAINST SUCH A RESOLUTION. WE SHOULD NOT TAKE AUSTRALIAN SUPPORT FOR GRANTED. AUSTRALIA'S TRADE AND OTHER INTERESTS IN SOUTH AMERICA AND IN THE THIRD WORLD HAD TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT (HENDERSON ADDED, IN STRICT CONFIDENCE, THAT ALTHOUGH AUSTRALIAN SUPPORT FOR THE SOUTH ATLANTIC OPERATION HAD BEEN PROJECTED AS UNANIMOUS AND TOTAL, NATIONAL COUNTRY PARTY MINISTERS IN THE GOVERNMENT COALITION AND THE DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND RESOURCES HAD BEEN LESS THAN ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT THE EXTENT OF AUSTRALIA'S EXTREMELY HELPFUL STANCE AT THE TIME) HENDERSON INDICATED FURTHER THAT IF AUSTRALIA WAS NOW ANXIOUS ABOUT BEING ASKED TO SUPPORT US ON THE QUESTION OF NEGOTIATIONS, HOW MUCH MORE DIFFICULT MIGHT IT BE FOR OTHERS, LESS COMMITTED THAN SHE HAD BEEN DURING THE CONFLICT, TO GIVE US THE SUPPORT WE WERE LOOKING FOR. GRATEFUL PERSUASIVE AND EXTENSIVE SPEAKING NOTE BY TELEGRAM.

MASON

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