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FM WASHINGTON 271642Z
TO IMMEDIATE F C O
TELNO 1474 OF 27 APRIL 1982.

YOUR TELNO 840: FALKLANDS

PLEASE PASS FOLLOWING FROM ME PERSONAL TO SECRETARY OF DEFENCE

1. THANK YOU FOR YOUR MESSAGE OF 26 APRIL. I HAVE HAD A GENERAL DISCUSSION WITH WEINBERGER, WHO LOOKS FORWARD TO SEEING YOU IN BRUSSELS NEXT WEEK.

2. HE IS DELIGHTED BY THE SOUTH GEORGIA OPERATION AND TELLS ME THAT THE PRESIDENT IS ALSO. HE IS SCEPTICAL WHETHER THE CURRENT NEGOTIATIONS ARE GOING TO GET ANYWHERE, THOUGH THINKS IT IS JUST POSSIBLE THAT SOMETHING COULD BE ACHIEVED IF GALTIERI GOES. IN ANY EVENT, HE IS HAVING TO LOOK AHEAD AND MAKE CONTINGENCY PLANS. WEINBERGER THINKS THAT WHAT THE US IS DOING AT THE MOMENT GOES ABOUT AS FAR AS THEY CAN MANAGE WITHOUT APPEARING TO TAKE SIDES. BUT IF THE TALKS BREAK DOWN AS A RESULT OF ARGENTINE INTRANSIGENCE AND THE USA COMES DOWN FIRMLY ON THE BRITISH SIDE, HE THINKS THE US GOVERNMENT WILL HAVE TO CONSIDER A SERIES OF STEPS THEY CAN TAKE. WEINBERGER SAYS THAT HE IS ALREADY THINKING ABOUT THIS. I AM SURE THAT HE WOULD NOT WANT TO COMMIT HIMSELF OR TO THINK THAT ANYTHING HE HAD SAID TO ME WOULD BE REPEATED BACK TO HIM OR ANYONE ELSE AS SUGGESTING SOME POSSIBLE UNDERTAKING.

3. I SUGGEST THEREFORE THAT WE HAVE TO WAIT TO SEE HOW EVENTS DEVELOP. IF THE DIPLOMATIC PATH GETS BLOCKED THEN BY THE TIME YOU SEE WEINBERGER NEXT WEEK WE MAY BE WELL INTO SERIOUS DISCUSSIONS ABOUT HOW THEY MIGHT EXTEND FURTHER SUPPORT. I BELIEVE THAT THE WILL IS THERE, BUT IT OBVIOUSLY NEEDS VERY TACTFUL HANDLING. THE AMERICANS STILL HAVE A PSYCHOSIS ABOUT GETTING INVOLVED IN ANOTHER VIETNAM. HOWEVER, MUCH PUBLIC, CONGRESSIONAL AND MEDIA OPINION IS REMARKABLY PRO-BRITISH ON THIS ISSUE. WEINBERGER HAD JUST BREAKFASTED WITH TWO CONGRESSMEN WHO WERE WEARING I BACK BRITAIN BADGES.

4. WEINBERGER ASKED WHETHER NATO WOULD BE MAKING ANY DECLARATION ON THE SUBJECT. HE DID NOT THINK THAT NATO WERE UNAFFECTED. WE WENT ON TO DISCUSS THE STRATEGIC VALUE OF THE FALKLAND ISLANDS AND SOUTH GEORGIA. HE AGREED WITH ME THAT THOUGH THEY MAY NOT HAVE BEEN OF PARTICULARLY POSITIVE STRATEGIC VALUE TO US, WE WOULD ALL BE VERY CONCERNED IF THE SOVIETS GOT PERMANENT USE OF FACILITIES IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC. I THINK THAT THIS IS NOT THE LEAST OF THE REASONS WHY CAP IS EAGER TO SUPPORT US.

HENDERSON

NMNN