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TO FLASH F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 343 OF 31 MARCH 1982

INFO FLASH TEL AVIV (FOR S OF S'S PARTY),

INFO IMMEDIATE BUENOS AIRES, WASHINGTON, PORT STANLEY

(PERSONAL FOR GOVERNOR), MODUK, CINC FLEET, F OF F1 (EMBARKED).

SOUTH GEORGIA: SECURITY COUNCIL

1. AS REPORTED BY TELEPHONE, WE LEARNED FROM THE US MISSION AT MIDDAY TODAY (31 MARCH) THAT THE NEW ARGENTINE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE (ROCA) THOUGHT THAT HE MIGHT BE INSTRUCTED TO BRING THE SOUTH GEORGIA QUESTION TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL LATER TODAY. FURTHER ENQUIRIES BY THE AMERICANS REVEALED THAT ROCA WAS THINKING NOT OF CALLING AN URGENT MEETING OF THE COUNCIL BUT OF ADDRESSING TO THE PRESIDENT (MRS KIRKPATRICK, USA) A NOTE SETTING OUT THE ARGENTINE CASE AND ASKING HER TO CIRCULATE IT AS A SECURITY COUNCIL DOCUMENT (IT HAD NOT REACHED HER BY CLOSE OF PLAY TODAY). MRS KIRKPATRICK'S FIRST REACTION WAS TO PROPOSE A MEETING THIS AFTERNOON BETWEEN ROCA AND ME, IN HER CAPACITY AS PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL. ROCA WAS HESITANT ABOUT THIS AND SAID THAT HE WOULD HAVE TO CONSULT HIS GOVERNMENT. I AGREED AT FIRST BUT HAVING BEEN TOLD OF GOULDING'S TELEPHONE CONVERSATIONS WITH FEARN AND HAVING SEEN YOUR TELNO 179 I DECIDED THAT IT WOULD BE PRUDENT TO OBTAIN YOUR REACTIONS TO THE POINTS BELOW BEFORE SEEING ROCA. I THEREFORE ASKED MRS KIRKPATRICK NOT TO PURSUE THE IDEA OF A MEETING TODAY.

2. MY NORMAL INSTINCT IS TO RESIST SECURITY COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS WHEREVER POSSIBLE. THESE DAYS ACTION IN THE COUNCIL RARELY HELPS TO ADVANCE SOLUTIONS. ON THE BROADER SOVEREIGNTY DISPUTE, THE VOTES ARE HEAVILY STACKED AGAINST US AT THE UN AND A ROUND IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL WOULD NOT IMPROVE THE CHANCES OF PROGRESS IN THE NEGOTIATIONS RELAUNCHED LAST MONTH. WE MIGHT EVEN HAVE TO VETO A RESOLUTION ON OUR OWN.

3. BUT IF, AS HINTED BY FEARN ON THE TELEPHONE, YOU HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THE ARGENTINES ARE CONTEMPLATING "DRAMATIC" (WHICH I TAKE TO MEAN MILITARY) ACTION AGAINST THE FALKLANDS IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS, I THINK THAT WE SHOULD CONSIDER TAKING THE INITIATIVE IN CONVENING THE SECURITY COUNCIL OURSELVES.

THE ARGENTINE MFA ARE PESSIMISTIC ABOUT HOW THEY WOULD FARE IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL AFTER (REPEAT AFTER) LAUNCHING AN INVASION. AS I HAVE REPORTED SEPARATELY, I DO NOT THINK THAT THEY HAVE PROPERLY THOUGHT THE QUESTION THROUGH. MY ESTIMATE IS THAT IT IS WE WHO WOULD NOT COMMAND THE NECESSARY VOTES FOR A RESOLUTION DEPLORING ARGENTINE AGGRESSION AND CALLING FOR WITHDRAWAL OF THEIR FORCES. BUT I AM INCLINED TO THINK THAT ACTION IN THE COUNCIL BEFORE (REPEAT BEFORE) AN INVASION WAS LAUNCHED COULD HAVE A USEFUL DETERRENT EFFECT ON THE ARGENTINES.

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4. IF A RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED, OR A PRESIDENTIAL STATEMENT MADE, CALLING UPON THE PARTIES TO PURSUE NEGOTIATIONS TO RESOLVE THE SOUTH GEORGIA AFFAIR PEACEFULLY AND TO CONTINUE TO CONDUCT PEACEFUL NEGOTIATIONS TO SETTLE THE FALKLAND ISLANDS PROBLEM IT WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT FOR THE ARGENTINES TO JUSTIFY A SUBSEQUENT MILITARY ADVENTURE. THE DANGER IS THAT SUCH A RESOLUTION WOULD BE WIDENED TO PREJUDICE THE SOVEREIGNTY QUESTIONS AND THAT IT WOULD INCLUDE LANGUAGE UNACCEPTABLE TO US. IF IN THE WORST CASE, WE HAD TO VETO, THIS MIGHT HELP THE ARGENTINES TO ARGUE THAT OUR "ABUSE" OF THE VETO HAD LEFT THEM NO ALTERNATIVE TO MILITARY ACTION.

5. I DO NOT KNOW ENOUGH ABOUT THE ACTUAL NAVAL AND MILITARY SITUATION TO OFFER A FIRM RECOMMENDATION. BUT IF YOU HAVE HARD EVIDENCE THAT THE ARGENTINES INTEND TO LAUNCH AN INVASION OF THE FALKLANDS IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS AND IF THAT EVIDENCE IS OF A KIND THAT WE CAN DEPLOY CONVINCINGLY IN PUBLIC TO SHOW THAT ARGENTINA IS A POTENTIAL AGGRESSOR, I WOULD BE INCLINED TO RECOMMEND THAT, IN THE INTEREST OF DETERRENCE, WE SHOULD TAKE THE RISK OF OURSELVES INITIATING ACTION IN THE COUNCIL, IN THE HOPE THAT WE WOULD BE ABLE TO OBTAIN A QUICK RESOLUTION OR PRESIDENTIAL STATEMENT CALLING FOR RESTRAINT AND A DIPLOMATIC SOLUTION.

6. YOU TELNO 180 (NOT TO ALL) HAS JUST ARRIVED. THE ABOVE COVERS ACTION IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL. THERE IS NOTHING WE COULD USEFULLY DO IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY. THE SECRETARY GENERAL IS ABOUT TO LEAVE FOR A TWO-WEEK VISIT TO EUROPE; HE COULD BE ASKED TO HELP BUT WE WOULD HAVE TO BE ABLE TO CONVINCE HIM OF ARGENTINA'S AGGRESSIVE INTENTIONS. MY VIEW REMAINS THAT THE SECURITY COUNCIL WOULD OFFER THE BEST PROSPECT, SUBJECT TO THE PROVISOS - PARAGRAPH 5 ABOVE.

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