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 TELEGRAM NUMBER 395 OF 26 APRIL 1982
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YOUR TELSNOs 106 TO ATHENS AND 296 TO UKMIS NEW YORK: SOUTH
 GEORGIA: FRENCH REACTIONS

ALQ 050/11
 (9)

1. I TOOK ACTION ON 25 APRIL WITH GUTMANN, THE SECRETARY-GENERAL AT THE QUAI. HE ASKED SOME FACTUAL QUESTIONS AND INDICATED UNDERSTANDING OF THE NEED TO EXERCISE SELF-DEFENCE AGAINST A POTENTIALLY HOSTILE SUBMARINE. HE SUBSEQUENTLY ENQUIRED WHETHER THE ACTION AGAINST THE SUBMARINE WAS LINKED WITH THE LANDING ON SOUTH GEORGIA, IMPLYING A SHADE OF DOUBT, WHICH I HAVE ATTEMPTED TO DISPEL, ABOUT WHETHER OUR INITIAL EXPLANATION OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE NAVAL ACTION HAD BEEN ENTIRELY FRANK.
2. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION ABOUT THE FALKLANDS AT THIS MORNING'S (26 APRIL) PRESS CONFERENCE, THE QUAI SPOKESMAN SAID THAT "THE EVENTS OVER THE LAST FEW HOURS CONFIRM EVEN MORE STRONGLY THE URGENT NEED FOR A NEGOTIATION".
3. FRENCH PRESS REACTIONS HAVE VARIED BETWEEN EXPRESSIONS OF SUPPORT AND OF ANXIETY. AN EDITORIAL IN LE MATIN (SOCIALIST) STRONGLY SUPPORTS BRITAIN'S RECAPTURE OF SOUTH GEORGIA. IT SAYS THAT THE SLOWNESS WITH WHICH THE BRITISH FLEET HAD BEEN SAILING TOWARDS THE FALKLANDS HAD BEEN INTERPRETED AS A LACK OF DETERMINATION BY LONDON. THIS ANALYSIS HAD NOW BEEN CONTRADICTED BY THE FACTS. "BRITAIN, UP TO NOW, HAS BEHAVED IN CONFORMITY WITH INTERNATIONAL LAW". THE ARGENTINES HAD BEEN GIVEN FULLY ADEQUATE WARNING OF BRITISH INTENTIONS TO ACT IF NEED BE. "ONE COULD NOT, IN THIS AFFAIR, FORGET THAT HOSTILITIES HAD BEEN DELIBERATELY, AND IN VIOLATION OF INTERNATIONAL RULES, STARTED BY BUENOS AIRES". THE EDITORIAL REFERS TO EUROPEAN REACTIONS OF SURPRISE, CONCERN OR AMUSEMENT AT A QUARREL OVER WHAT WAS USUALLY THOUGHT TO BE THE OUT OF DATE CONCEPT OF SOVEREIGNTY AND ADVISES THAT EUROPE SHOULD GET RID OF ITS COMPLEXES. "BRITAIN RULED CALMLY AND DEMOCRATICALLY OVER THE INHABITANTS OF THE FALKLANDS WHO SCARCELY COMPLAINED. BRITAIN HAD RIGHT ON ITS SIDE AND THERE WAS NO REASON FOR IT TO GIVE UP OR GIVE WAY IN ORDER TO SERVE THE INTERNAL POLITICAL PURPOSES OF GENERAL GALTIERI".

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4. LE FIGARO (RIGHT WING) COMMENTS IRONICALLY THAT "THE RUSSIANS WILL ACCUSE THE BRITISH OF BREAKING THE LAW ON THE GROUNDS THAT THEY ARE INVADING THEIR OWN TERRITORIES INSTEAD OF INVADING CZECHOSLOVAKIA, HUNGARY OR AFGHANISTAN LIKE THE REAL DEFENDERS OF INTERNATIONAL MORALITY".

5. LE MONDE, DATED 27 APRIL, HOWEVER, STRESSES THE DANGERS OF ESCALATION. IT SAYS THAT IT WAS HARD TO STOP A WAR WHEN "EMOTIONAL AND IRRATIONAL ELEMENTS" WERE INVOLVED, "AS IS VERY MUCH THE CASE IN THE DIALOGUE OF THE DEAF BETWEEN BRITAIN AND ARGENTINA". IN LE MONDE'S VIEW THE SOUTH GEORGIA OPERATION REDUCED TO SOME EXTENT BRITAIN'S ADVANTAGE VIS-A-VIS WORLD OPINION AND INCREASED THE LIKELIHOOD OF A DANGEROUS INTERNATIONALISATION OF THE CONFLICT BY BRINGING OTHER LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES IN ON ARGENTINA'S SIDE.

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2
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