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TELEGRAM NUMBER 1415 OF 22 APRIL

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INFO SAVING ALL C.G.S IN U S A.

SECRETARY OF STATE'S VISIT: MEETING WITH THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE

SUMMARY:

1 THE SECRETARY OF STATE SPENT 1 AND 1 HALF HOURS WITH THE COMMITTEE. ALMOST ALL THE MEMBERS WERE PRESENT AND, WHILE THEY WERE CONCERNED THAT WE SHOULD AVOID ARMED CONFRONTATION IF POSSIBLE, ONLY SENATOR HELMS WAS EQUIVOCAL ON THE RIGHTS AND WRONGS OF THE ISSUE. SENATORS PERCY AND PELL (CHAIRMAN AND RANKING MINORITY MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE) MADE STATEMENTS TO THE PRESS AFTER THE MEETING STRONGLY BACKING THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT.

DETAILS

2. IN HIS INTRODUCTORY REMARKS, THE SECRETARY OF STATE MADE THE FOLLOWING MAIN POINTS:

(I) THE ESSENCE OF THE PROBLEM WAS THAT ARGENTINA HAD COMMITTED AGGRESSION, DENYING THE RIGHTS OF THE FALKLAND ISLANDERS TO DETERMINE THEIR OWN FUTURE JUST AS COMPLETELY AS THE SOVIET UNION HAD DONE IN AFGHANISTAN.

(II) IF THE AGGRESSION WERE ALLOWED TO STAND IT COULD HAVE THE MOST DAMAGING IMPLICATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL LAW, WORLD ORDER AND THE PEACEFUL RESOLUTION OF DISPUTES.

(III) THE U K WAS HELL BENT ON A PEACEFUL SOLUTION IF POSSIBLE AND WE HOPED THAT OUR CURRENT MILITARY PRESSURES, COMBINED WITH THE ECONOMIC PRESSURES APPLIED BY THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY AND OTHERS, WOULD BRING A PEACEFUL OUTCOME. BUT WE WERE IN NO DOUBT OF OUR RIGHTS AND OUR TASK FORCE WOULD BE USED IF NEED BE. IF, ON THE OTHER HAND, THE DETERRENT EFFECT OF THE FORCE WAS STRONG ENOUGH TO INDUCE ARGENTINIAN WITHDRAWAL, THAT WOULD BE THE GREATEST TRIUMPH FOR WHICH WE COULD HOPE.

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(IV) SECRETARY HAIG HAD DEDICATED HIMSELF UNSTINTINGLY TO THE SEARCH FOR A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT. HIS TASK WAS NOT ENDED BUT HE WOULD HAVE TO JUDGE AT WHAT MOMENT FURTHER ATTEMPTS AT NEGOTIATION BECAME FRUITLESS.

3. IN SUBSEQUENT QUESTIONS, THERE WAS UNNEQUIVOCAL SUPPORT FOR OUR POSITION FROM SENATORS BIDEN, PELL AND TSONGAS (DEMOCRATS) AND BOSCHWITZ AND MATHIAS (REPUBLICANS). ALL MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE WERE CLEARLY LOOKING FOR SOME WAY OF AVOIDING A CONFLICT AND A NUMBER OF SUGGESTIONS WERE MADE, SUCH AS REFERENCE TO THE INTERNATIONAL COURT, A REFERENDUM AMONG THE ISLANDERS (WITH THE POSSIBILITY OF ARGENTINA BUYING OUT THOSE WHO DID NOT WISH TO STAY) AND (FROM SENATOR HELMS) A CHANNEL ISLANDS CONSTITUTION FOR THE FALKLANDS. HELMS SPOKE OF THE VITAL IMPORTANCE OF AVOIDING A CONFRONTATION WHICH WOULD BRING THE U.S. FACE TO FACE WITH ITS COMMITMENTS UNDER THE RIO TREATY AND WOULD GIVE COMFORT ONLY TO THE FORCES OF MARXISM WHICH WERE TAKING OVER CENTRAL AMERICA. BUT HE WAS AT PAINS TO POINT OUT THAT HE WAS OPPOSED TO ARGENTINIAN AGGRESSION, WAS A CLOSE FRIEND OF BRITAIN AND WAS SIMPLY LOOKING FOR A PEACEFUL OUTCOME.

4. SENATOR MATHIAS (CHAIRMAN OF THE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC SUB-COMMITTEE) ASKED FOR DETAILED CONSULTATION BETWEEN THE U.S. AND THE U K ON THE IMPLEMENTATION AND IMPLICATIONS OF ECONOMIC MEASURES AGAINST ARGENTINA.

5 AT THE END OF THE MEETING SENATOR PERCY, IN THE PRESENCE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE, TOLD THE PRESS THAT IF ARGENTINA'S USE OF FORCE WAS SUCCESSFUL A DAMAGING PRECEDENT WOULD BE SET AROUND THE WORLD. PERCY PAID TRIBUTE TO HAIG FOR HIS EFFORTS TO SUBSTITUTE DIPLOMACY FOR MILITARY ACTION. HOWEVER, A SHOW OF FORCE WAS NECESSARY AND THERE WAS NO QUESTION ABOUT THE SENTIMENTS OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE. THEY WERE SOLIDLY IN SUPPORT OF THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED KINGDOM, WHO HAD RIGHT ON THEIR SIDE. ALL NATIONS SHOULD OBSERVE U N SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 502.

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6. SENATOR PELL ALSO COMMENDED THE ADMINISTRATION'S EFFORTS AND SAID THAT IF DIPLOMACY FAILED, THERE SHOULD BE NO DOUBT THAT THE AMERICAN PEOPLE WERE ON THE SIDE OF THE BRITISH.

7. PELL GAVE ME A COPY OF A LETTER HE HAS SENT TO HAIG ASKING WHETHER US DEFENCE ARTICLES WERE USED BY ARGENTINA IN ITS INVASION OF THE FALKLANDS AND WHETHER SUCH USE WOULD VIOLATE THE TERMS OF THE ARMS EXPORT CONTROL ACT AND WITH WHAT CONSEQUENCES.

HENDERSON

SANTO DOMINGO
Repetition to ASUNCION
referred for departmental decision.
repeated as requested to other posts.

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