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FALKLAND ISLANDS: VISIT TO WASHINGTON

THE SECRETARY OF STATE GAVE AN ON THE RECORD PRESS BRIEFING TO
 BRITISH CORRESPONDENTS IN WASHINGTON AT 12.30 PM ON FRIDAY
 23 APRIL. FOLLOWING IS EDITED TRANSCRIPT:

OPENING STATEMENTS

I MUST TELL YOU THAT SERIOUS DIFFICULTIES REMAIN.
 I THINK IN VIEW OF THE POSITION TAKEN BY ARGENTINA, THAT THEIR
 AGGRESSION SHOULD BE REWARDED, ITS HARDLY SURPRISING THAT IT
 SHOULD BE DIFFICULT TO RECONCILE THE BRITISH VIEW WITH THE
 ARGENTINE VIEW. BUT WE DO REMAIN ABSOLUTELY DETERMINED TO WORK FOR
 A PEACEFUL SOLUTION, IF ITS HUMANLY POSSIBLE, AND I SHALL
 SPARE NO EFFORT IN THAT. BUT WE MUSTN'T SHRINK FROM THE
 POSSIBILITY OF THE USE OF FORCE. IF ALL ELSE FAILS IT
 MIGHT COME TO THAT, AND IT WOULD BE NO SERVICE TO THE
 CAUSE OF PEACE FOR US TO PRETEND OTHERWISE. BUT IT MUST BE
 RIGHT FOR US TO USE EVERY POSSIBLE ATTEMPT TO ACHIEVE A
 SATISFACTORY SOLUTION BY SOME OTHER MEANS.

THE STARTING POINT FOR US IS OF COURSE SCR 502, WHICH IS
 MANDATORY. IT IMPOSES ON ARGENTINA THE INTERNATIONAL LEGAL
 OBLIGATION TO WITHDRAW ALL ITS FORCES FROM THE FALKLAND ISLANDS:
 AND FAILING THIS, WE HAVE UNDER ARTICLE 51 THE RIGHT OF COURSE
 TO SELF DEFENCE, WHICH WE ARE DETERMINED TO EXERCISE IF
 NECESSARY. OUR STRATEGY IN THIS WHOLE EXERCISE IS TO APPLY
 THE MAXIMUM PRESSURE WE CAN ON THE ARGENTINES - MILITARY, ECONOMIC
 AND POLITICAL - AND I THINK IT IS HAVING ITS EFFECT AND WE ARE VERY
 GRATEFUL FOR THE SUPPORT WE HAVE HAD FROM ALL OUR FRIENDS. MR
 HAIG HAS PUT A TERRIFIC EFFORT INTO TRYING TO FIND A PEACEFUL
 SOLUTION.

WE HAVE BEEN EXPLORING TOGETHER YESTERDAY AND TODAY
 ALL THE IDEAS AND PROPOSALS THAT HAVE COME UP FOR WITHDRAWAL
 OF ARGENTINE FORCES AND THE ARRANGEMENTS TO BE MADE
 THEREAFTER, AND THE LONG TERM SOLUTION TO THIS PROBLEM IN
 ACCORDANCE WITH THE WISHES OF THE PEOPLE. THE POINTS OF BASIC
 CONCERN STILL REMAIN THE SAME ONES THAT I TOLD THE HOUSE
 OF COMMONS THE OTHER DAY: THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE WITHDRAWAL,
 THE NATURE OF ANY INTERIM ADMINISTRATION, AND THE
 FRAMEWORK FOR THE NEGOTIATIONS ON THE LONG TERM.

WE

WE ARE STILL HARD AT WORK. I CANT REPORT ANY PARTICULAR PROGRESS, EXCEPT TO THE EXTENT THAT A VERY THOROUGH AND DEEP EXPLORATION OF THE POSSIBILITIES MUST BE A KIND OF PROGRESS, AND MUST BE THE WAY IN WHICH WE TACKLE WHAT IS OBVIOUSLY A VERY FORMIDABLE TASK.

DECLINING CREDIBILITY?

Q: YOU ARE NOT LOOKING AT DEADLINES, BUT THE LONGER YOU ARE IN TALKS ABOUT TALKS THE LESS CREDIBLE YOUR POSITION BECOMES?

A: NO I DONT THINK THAT. HOW LONG THIS MISSION CAN GO ON: HOW LONG THIS PROCESS CAN CONTINUE: I AM NOT SURE. BUT I AM CERTAIN ITS RIGHT TO GO ON WITH IT WHILE THERE IS ANY CHANCE THAT IT MIGHT CONCEIVABLY SUCCEED.

US POSITION

Q: YOU SPOKE OF THE VALUE OF PRESSURE FROM EUROPEAN AND OTHER COUNTRIES. WOULDNT IT BE EVEN MORE VALUABLE IF US STARTED TO APPLY SOME SORT OF PRESSURE?

A: YES OF COURSE IT WOULD HELP. BUT SO LONG AS THEY ARE IN A NEGOTIATING POSITION IT WOULD NOT BE SENSIBLE FOR THEM TO COME DOWN ON ONE SIDE OR THE OTHER BECAUSE OBVIOUSLY THAT WOULD END THE NEGOTIATIONS.

Q: BRITISH POSITION RESTS OF MORAL AND LEGAL AUTHORITY OF THE UN. THE US VOTED FOR THAT RESOLUTION. HAVE YOU ANY COMMENT THEREFORE ON THE CONDUCT OF AMBASSADOR KIRKPATRICK?

A: NO I WOULDNT COMMENT ON THAT. ITS A VERY SERIOUS MATTER THAT THERE IS A SC RESOLUTION IN WHICH ARGENTINA IS IN BREACH. UNLESS THAT IS PUT RIGHT BY ONE MEANS OR ANOTHER THEN WE GO BACK TO A SITUATION WHEN WORLD AFFAIRS ARE CONDUCTED OUT OF ORDER. WHAT EVERYBODY WANTS IS AN ORDERLY WAY OF SETTLING THIS DISPUTE. AND THERE ARE PLENTY OF WAYS IT CAN BE SETTLED.

Q: AMBASSADOR KIRKPATRICK DENIED ON TELEVISION THAT THIS WAS AGGRESSION.

A: QUITE OBVIOUSLY IT IS AGGRESSION. AND THE RESOLUTION TAKES ACCOUNT OF THAT FACT. IT CALLS FOR THE END OF HOSTILITIES AND IT CALLS FOR A WITHDRAWAL OF THE ARGENTINE FORCES.

Q: THE AMERICAN PUBLIC ARE OVERWHELMINGLY IN FAVOUR OF BRITISH CASE. DO YOU DETECT THAT SAME STRENGTH OF SUPPORT IN THE WHITE HOUSE ADMINISTRATION?

A: I WOULDNT COMMENT ON THAT. THEY HAVE A NATURAL AFFINITY WITH OUR CASE WHICH IS BASED ON THE UN RESOLUTION, PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY AND SO ON. I HAVENT GOT ANY DOUBT ABOUT THAT. BUT AS I SAY, WHILE THE NEGOTIATIONS CONTINUE OF COURSE THE ADMINISTRATION MUST REMAIN UNALIGNED WITH ONE SIDE OR THE OTHER. I THINK ITS NATURAL THAT IT SHOULD BE SO, BUT MANY AMERICANS, A NUMBER OF AMERICANS, AND CERTAINLY IN THE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE, HAVE VERY STRONG AND SYMPATHETIC SUPPORT FOR BRITAIN WAS EXPRESSED.

Q: ARE YOU CONFIDENT OF THEIR SUPPORT IF DIPLOMACY FAILS AND THERE IS A CONFLICT?

A: THATS AT A LATER STAGE. ITS NOT FOR ME TO COMMENT. I MYSELF AM CONFIDENT ABOUT IT, BUT IT IS ONLY AN OPINION.

THE PROPOSALS.

Q: ARE YOU UNDER ANY PRESSURE FROM THE AMERICANS TO MODIFY THE PROPOSALS YOU CAME WITH, LEAVING ASIDE ARGENTINE WITHDRAWAL?

A: NATURALLY THEY HAVE HAD SUGGESTIONS TO MAKE ABOUT WHAT WE HAVE PUT FORWARD, AND WE HAVE BEEN MAKING COMMENTS ABOUT WHAT THEY HAVE PUT FORWARD, BUT OUR OBJECTIVE IS EXACTLY THE SAME. WE SHARE IT, AND THAT IS TO FIND A PEACEFUL METHOD WHEREBY WE CAN ACHIEVE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SCR 502.

Q: HAVE YOU CHANGED THE SPECIFICS YOU HAVE BEEN SEEKING AND HAVE YOU MADE ANY ACCOMMODATION

A: NO, WE HAVE BEEN EXPLORING POSSIBLE WAYS FORWARD AND I CANT GO INTO THE DETAILS OF THE NEGOTIATIONS ANY FURTHER. IT CLEARLY WOULDNT BE RIGHT.

TRAVEL PLANS

Q: YOU ARE STILL DETERMINED TO GO HOME TONIGHT. WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS FOR THE WEEKEND?

A: MY INTENTION IS TO GO HOME TONIGHT. IF ANYTHING AROSE TO CHANGE THAT, WELL OF COURSE IT COULD BE CHANGED. BUT MY PRESENT PLAN IS TO GO HOME TONIGHT, AND I THINK THAT WILL BE THE APPROPRIATE TIME.

Q: HAVE YOU BEEN IN TOUCH WITH MRS THATCHER OVER THE LAST FEW DAYS?

A: NOT DIRECTLY NO.

Q: SECRETARY HAIG HAS SPENT A LOT OF TIME ON THIS, AND YOU WANT TO CONTINUE IT. WHY ARE YOU STICKING TO YOUR PLAN TO GO HOME TONIGHT?

A: IF THERE WAS ANY VALUE OR ANY ADVANTAGE IN MY DOING THAT, THEN I COULD ALWAYS CHANGE IT. BUT I WOULD JUDGE THAT I WILL HAVE MADE SUCH PROGRESS AS I CAN MAKE TONIGHT. IF ANYTHING ARISES THEN IT CAN BE ALTERED.

Q: IF YOU LEAVE TONIGHT YOU WOULD HAVE SHOT YOUR BOLT?

A: NO

US POSITION

Q: YOU SAID YOU MIGHT GO TO THE UN IF IT WERE USEFUL. YOU SAY NOW THAT YOU ARE NOT EXPECTING THE AMERICANS TO PUT ON PRESSURE. IF YOU GO HOME TONIGHT WOULD THE NEXT LOGICAL STEP BE FOR THE AMERICANS TO PUT ON PRESSURE, AND HAVE YOU ASKED THEM IF THEY WILL DO SO?

A: ITS REALLY FOR MR HAIG TO DECIDE THE NEXT STAGE IN HIS ATTEMPT TO FIND A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT.

Q: HAVE YOU ASKED HIM TO APPLY SANCTIONS?

A: I HAVENT ASKED HIM TO APPLY SANCTIONS. I HAVE TALKED ABOUT VARIOUS WAYS IN WHICH ONE WOULD LIKE TO SEE MORE PRESSURE APPLIED TO ARGENTINA. BUT AS YOU KNOW, I HAVE ALSO UNDERSTOOD AND DEFENDED THEIR POSITION, WHICH I BELIEVE TO BE CORRECT AT PRESENT. AND THAT IS THAT WHILE THEY ARE CONTINUING NEGOTIATING SO HARD AND SO GENUINELY, CLEARLY IT WOULDNT BE RIGHT TO COME DOWN ON ONE SIDE OR THE OTHER.

NEXT MOVES

Q: WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE? WILL HAIG TAKE PROPOSALS BACK TO BUENOS AIRES

A: HE MIGHT OR HE MIGHT NOT. THATS AN OPEN QUESTION AT THE MOMENT. HE WILL DECIDE IN THE END, AND SO AS LONG AS THERE IS A POSSIBILITY OF ACHIEVING A SUCCESSFUL RESULT OF COURSE ITS RIGHT TO CONTINUE I ADHERE TO THE VIEW THAT A SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME OF HIS MISSION IS THE BEST ANSWER FOR BRITAIN AND FOR EVERYBODY, BUT OF COURSE ONE MUST ENVISAGE THE POSSIBILITY THAT IT MIGHT NOT SUCCEED, AND THEN INDEED ITS A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT SITUATION. BUT LETS NOT ANTICIPATE THAT UNTIL IT HAPPENS.

Q: IS THERE ENOUGH NEW IN THE SITUATION FOR HIM TO TAKE SOMETHING BACK TO BA?

A: WE MUST WAIT AND SEE WHAT JUDGEMENT HE MAKES AT THE END OF THESE SERIES OF MEETINGS THAT I AM HAVING WITH HIM AND HOW HE JUDGES IT

Q: WOULD YOU WANT HIM TO GO BACK TO BA,

A: THATS A MATTER FOR HIM TO JUDGE. SO LONG AS THERE IS LIFE IN HIS MISSION AND POSSIBILITY AND THE HOPE IT WILL PRODUCE A SUCCESSFUL RESULT, I AM ENTIRELY IN FAVOUR OF IT CONTINUING.

Q: HAVE YOU BEEN TRYING TO NEGOTIATE JOINT ANGLO AMERICAN POSITION TO TAKE TO ARGENTINA?

A: NO, INDEED NOT. MR HAIG HAS PUT UP PROPOSALS AND WE HAVE PUT UP IDEAS AND MADE SUGGESTIONS IN RELATION TO THEM. HE IS THE NEGOTIATOR BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES AND THERE IS NO QUESTION OF A JOINT ANGLO AMERICAN POSITION.

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