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TO PRIORITY UKREP BRUSSELS

TELEGRAM NUMBER 413 OF 10 MAY

INFO PRIORITY ALL EC POSTS, WASHINGTON, UKMIS NEW YORK

INFORMAL FOREIGN MINISTERS WEEKEND: FALKLANDS - EC ECONOMIC MEASURES

SUMMARY

1. IN A DISCUSSION ON 9 MAY MINISTERS EXPRESSED SOLIDARITY WITH BRITAIN OVER THE FALKLANDS ISSUE, BUT WERE NOT READY TO TAKE A POLITICAL DECISION IN FAVOUR OF RENEWING SANCTIONS UNTIL THEY SAW HOW EVENTS MOVED OVER THE COMING WEEK. NO MINISTER PRESENT GAVE ANY SIGN THAT HE WOULD RESIST A CONSENSUS IN FAVOUR OF RENEWAL WHEN THE DECISION CAME TO BE TAKEN, THOUGH SEVERAL WERE CLEARLY WORRIED ABOUT THE PROSPECT OF FURTHER MILITARY ESCALATION.

DETAIL

2. THE SUBJECT WAS RAISED BY COLLINS (IRELAND). SPEAKING FROM A WRITTEN BRIEF, HE SAID THAT THERE HAD BEEN AN OUTBURST OF EMOTION IN IRELAND OVER THE SINKING OF THE GENERAL BELGRANO, REINFORCED BY THE DESTRUCTION OF HMS SHEFFIELD. THE ORIGINAL DECISION TO IMPOSE ECONOMIC MEASURES HAD BEEN A DIFFICULT ONE. NOW, WITH THE COLLAPSE OF THE HAIG INITIATIVE AND FIGHTING IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC THE FOCUS SEEMED TO HAVE SHIFTED TO THE MILITARY OPTION. THE IRISH FELT THAT THEY WERE GIVING THEIR SUPPORT TO MILITARY RATHER THAN TO DIPLOMATIC ACTION. THIS WAS VERY DIFFICULT FOR IRISH PUBLIC OPINION, IN VIEW OF THE COUNTRY'S TRADITIONAL NEUTRALITY. THOUGH IRELAND UNDERSTOOD ARGENTINA'S FRUSTRATION AT YEARS OF FRUITLESS NEGOTIATION OVER THE FALKLANDS, IT WAS HER OPPOSITION TO THE USE OF FORCE WHICH HAD LED HER TO SUPPORT RESOLUTION 502. AS EVENTS UNFOLDED, THIS POSITION NOW APPEARED TO BE LEADING IRELAND INTO A SITUATION INCOMPATIBLE WITH HER NEUTRALITY. BRITISH TELEVISION PROPAGANDA (SIC), INCLUDING ASSERTIONS THAT

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IRELAND SUPPORTED BRITAIN, CAUSED PARTICULAR PROBLEMS. THE PRINCIPLE OF COMMUNITY SOLIDARITY SHOULD BE APPLIED TO AGRICULTURAL PRICES AS WELL AS TO THE FALKLAND ISLANDS.

3. GENSHHER (FRG) SAID THAT BRITAIN WAS IN A VRRY DIFFICULT POSITION. ARGENTINA HAD VIOLATED INEERNATIONAL LAW, AND IN THE LAST RESORT A FRIEND WAS A FRIEND, AND AN ALLY AN ALLY. CHEYSSON (FRANCE) ASSOCIATED HIMSELF WITH GENSCHER'S REMARKS, AND EXPRESSED SOLIDARITY WITH BRITAIN.

4. COLOMBO REAFFIRMED ITALY'S SOLIDARITY WITH BRITAIN, BUT URGED THAT WE SPEED UP THE SEARCH FOR A SOLUTION. VAN DER STOEL (NETHERLANDS), OLESEN (DENMARK), MME FLESCHE (LUXEMBOURG) AND TINDEMANS (BELGIUM) ALSO EXPRESSED SOLIDARITY. VAN DER STOEL URGED THAT THERE BE NO RECOURSE TO MILITARY ACTION WHILE EFFORTS TO SEEK A DIPLOMATIC SOLUTION CONTINUED. OLESEN SAID THAT IT WAS TOO EARLY TODAY TO REACH A DECISION ON RENEWAL. IF THERE WAS TO BE FURTHER DISCUSSION BEFORE 17 MAY, THIS MUST IN THE FIRST INSTANCE BE IN THE FRAMEWORK OF POLITICAL COOPERATION. I EXPRESSED APPRECIATION OF THE SOLIDARITY WHICH HAD BEEN SHOWN, AND UNDERTOOK TO CONTINUE TO DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO KEEP PARTNERS INFORMED. I POINTED AGAIN TO THE EFFORTS WE WERE MAKING TO PROMOTE A NEGOTIATED SOLUTION, AND - IN REPLY TO VAN DER STOEL - SAID THAT I COULD GIVE NO UNQUALIFIED GUARANTEE THAT WE WOULD BE ABLE TO AVOID MILITARY ACTION, NOT LEAST BECAUSE OF THE NEED TO ENSURE THE SECURITY OF THE TASK FORCE.

5. HARALAMBOPOULOS (GREECE) AGREED WITH HIS PARTNERS. THE ARGENTINE ACTION HAD BEEN VIOLENT BUT THERE MUST BE A PEACEFUL SOLUTION. GREECE WANTED THIS TO COME QUICKLY: THERE MUST BE NO MORE ESCALATION, AND NO MORE VICTIMS. I HAD SPOKEN OF SELF-DETERMINATION IN THE FALKLANDS CONTEXT. IT WAS INCONSISTENT TO APPLY DIFFERENT STANDARDS TO THE FALKLANDS AND TO CYPRUS. THE INVASION OF CYPRUS WAS A EUROPEAN PROBLEM.

6. CONCLUDING THE DISCUSSION, COLLINS (IRELAND) SAID THAT IF THE CONSENSUS OF HIS COLLEAGUES TURNED OUT TO BE IN FAVOUR OF CONTINUING ECONOMIC MEASURES, IT MUST BE

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CLEAR THAT THE ACTION WAS INTENDED TO REINFORCE POLITICAL AND DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS, AND PUBLIC GUIDANCE TO THAT EFFECT WOULD HELP HIS OWN POSITION. HE REPEATED THAT IRELAND AT PRESENT FELT THAT SHE WAS BEING FORCED INTO THE POSITION OF SUPPORTING MILITARY ACTION.

7. THE MORE GENERAL DISCUSSION OF THE FALKLANDS SITUATION ON 8 MAY IS RECORDED SEPARATELY WITH DISCUSSION OF OTHER ISSUES: IT INCLUDED NO DISCUSSION OF ECONOMIC MEASURES.

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