



FCS/80/125

MEMBERS OF OD

ms. Prime Minister

The helicopters are on present plans  
 due to land at 2 am, London time on  
24 July.

La. Prime  
Prime 23/7

New Hebrides

1. Members of OD will be aware that Mr Blaker met his French counterpart M. Dijoud in Paris on Saturday 19 July.
2. They agreed that:-
  - (a) Independence should take place on 30 July;
  - (b) the New Hebrides Government should be pressed to improve their proposed Regional and Land Laws, and;
  - (c) subject to the approval of the Prime Minister and President Giscard, British and French troops, acting jointly and using minimum force, should restore the Condominium and thus the authority of the Central Government to the island of Santo.
3. The two Ministers agreed that their two Representatives should return to the New Hebrides to prepare the ground for (b) and (c), which they are now doing.
4. The Prime Minister and President Giscard have approved the joint action at (c) and joint directives have been issued to the British and French Force Commanders to mount a limited operation to restore central government on the island of Santo.
5. The operation will be mounted on 24 July by a force comprising about 100 Royal Marines and 100 French Troops from New Caledonia; using French Puma helicopters and British Hercules aircraft. The troops are under strict orders to try to avoid casualties to either side. The French Resident Commissioner went to Santo in advance of the troops to try to persuade Stevens and the French Colons to offer no resistance.



6. The operation will enable us to discharge our joint obligation to restore order and to bring the New Hebrides to Independence with its territorial integrity preserved. The British and French Governments have also agreed to accept a limited commitment to maintain a joint military presence in the New Hebrides after independence should this prove necessary and be requested by the Independent Government.

*C*

(CARRINGTON)

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

23 July 1980

23 JUN 1980

