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TOP SECRET

FM WASHINGTON 211950Z

TO FLASH F C O

TELNO 1381 OF 21 APRIL 1982.

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MY TELNO 1376: FALKLANDS

1. HAIG ASKED ME TO SEE HIM AGAIN URGENTLY. HE SAID THAT HE HAD BEEN GIVING FURTHER THOUGHT TO OUR PROPOSED OPERATION, AN EVENT THAT HE WAS SURE WOULD ALTER THE WHOLE SCENE. HIS IMMEDIATE CONCERN WAS THE PROBLEM THAT IT WOULD CAUSE FOR THE US IN THEIR DEALINGS WITH ARGENTINA. THE LATTER WOULD REGARD IT AS AN ACT OF COLLUSION BETWEEN WASHINGTON AND LONDON, PARTICULARLY IF YOU WERE ARRIVING AT ABOUT THE TIME THE OPERATION WAS TAKING PLACE, OR IF YOU WERE HERE WHEN IT TOOK PLACE.
2. IN ANY EVENT THE ARGENTINIANS WOULD KNOW THAT THEY, THE AMERICANS, MUST HAVE HAD PRIOR KNOWLEDGE OF THE INTENDED INVASION. HAIG TOLD ME THAT IN FACT THEY HAD COLLATERAL INTELLIGENCE NOW OF THE PRESENCE OF THE TASK FORCE OFF SOUTH GEORGIA. THE ARGENTINIANS WOULD BE DEEPLY SUSPICIOUS IF THE AMERICANS HAD DONE NOTHING, HAVING RECEIVED INFORMATION OF BRITISH MILITARY INTENTIONS. HE THEREFORE THOUGHT THAT HE WOULD HAVE TO GIVE THE ARGENTINIAN JUNTA ADVANCE NOTICE OF OUR INTENDED OPERATION. HE WOULD SAY THAT THEY KNEW ABOUT THIS FROM THEIR OWN INTELLIGENCE SOURCES. HE WOULD ONLY NOTIFY THEM AT A SUFFICIENTLY LATE TIME SO THAT THIS WOULD INVOLVE NO MILITARY THREAT FOR US. IF THE AMERICANS ACTED IN THIS WAY THEY WOULD BE ABLE TO SHOW EVEN-HANDEDNESS TO THE ARGENTINIANS AND THIS WOULD ENABLE THEM TO CONTINUE THEIR ROLE AS GO-BETWEEN IN THE NEGOTIATION.
3. I EXPRESSED STRONG OBJECTION TO WHAT HAIG HAD TOLD ME. IT WOULD BE TAKEN EXTREMELY ADVERSELY IN LONDON AS GOING MUCH FURTHER THAN THE REQUIREMENTS OF NEGOTIATING NEUTRALITY REQUIRED. TO HAND ON TO THE ARGENTINIANS US INTELLIGENCE ABOUT BRITISH MOVEMENTS AND INTENTIONS AT AN EXTREMELY DELICATE MOMENT WAS TO HELP THEM AND WAS NOT SIMPLY TO BE NEUTRAL. BUT THERE WAS AN EVEN MORE SERIOUS OBJECTION. THE ARGENTINIANS MIGHT WELL TURN SUCH PRIOR INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION TO THEIR OWN USE AGAINST OUR INVASION FORCE. THEY WOULD CERTAINLY GIVE THE MARINES AND OTHER ARGENTINIANS WHO WERE PRESENT IN SOUTH GEORGIA ADVANCE WARNING. THEY MIGHT WELL GIVE THEIR SUBMARINES INSTRUCTIONS TO ATTACK OUR SHIPS. THEY COULD MOUNT A SUICIDE AIR ATTACK UPON OUR NAVAL FORCES. AS SOON AS THE AMERICANS HAD GIVEN THEM SUCH INFORMATION THEY WOULD NO DOUBT BROADCAST SOME INDIGNANT APPEAL TO THE WORLD.

NOT DO AT ALL IF PRIOR WARNING TO THE ARGENTINIANS LEAD TO MILITARY DIFFICULTIES FOR US. WE DISCUSSED THE ISSUE TOGETHER A BIT LONGER AND THEY CAME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT THEY WOULD ABANDON THE IDEA OF PRIOR NOTIFICATION. BUT THEY ASKED ME WHAT THEY COULD DO TO PRESERVE THEIR NEGOTIATING NEUTRALITY. I SAID THAT I MUST INSIST BEYOND A SHADWO OF A DOUBT THAT THEY WOULD NOT GIVE PRIOR NOTICE TO THE ARGENTINIANS. HAIG GACE ME AN ABSOLUTE ASSURANCE ON THAT POINT. I SAID THAT I THOUGH THAT AS SOON AS OUR INVASION OF SOUTH GEORGIA BECAME PUBLIC AMERICANS WOULD NOT DOUBT SAY THAT THEY CONTINUED TO BELIVE THAT THE PARTIES TO THE DISPUTE SHOULD REFRAIN FROM THE USE OF FORCE AND THAT THEY HOPED THAT A SETTLEMENT COULD BE REACHED BY PEACEFUL MEANS. HAIG SAID THAT THEY WOULD BE BOUND TO TAKE THIS LINE. I SAID THAT I SHOULD NOT LEAVE HIM IN ANY DOUBT THAT IT WOULD NOT BE POPULAR IN THE UK, WHERE IT WAS CONSIDERED THAT WE HAD A RIGHT TO RESTOR THE SITUATION AFTER THE ARGENTINIAN AGGRESSION AND IT WOULD NOT GO DOWN WELL IN LONDON IF THE AMERICANS APPEARED TO TBE CRITICISING US IN THE EXERCISE OF THOSE RIGHTS. HAIG SAID THAT NEVERTHELESS THEY WOULD HAVE TO STRIKE AN EVEN-HANDED POSTURE ABOUT THE NON USE OF FORCE.

5. WE THEN WENT ON TO DISCUSS WHETHER THE US WOULD ADMIT TO THE FACT THAT THEY HAD HAD PRIOR NOTICE OF OUR INVASION. I SAID THAT IF THEY FELT IT NECESSARY TO SAY THAT THEY HAD HAD PRIOR NOTICE, THEY SHOULD BASSE THEMSELVES ON THEIR OWN INTELLIGENCE AND NOT ON ANYTHING WE HAD TOLD THEM.

6. IN ASKING ME TO TELL YOU ALL THIS PERSONALLY ON A SECURE TELEPHONE LINE WHICH, AS YOU KNOW, I HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO DO, HAIG SAID THAT HE HOPED YOU WOULD GIVE THOUGHT TO THE LINE TO TAKE WHEN YOU ARRIVE HERE. HE THOUGHT THAT IT WOULD BE MORE AWKWARD FOR THE AMERICANS IF OUR INVASION TOOK PLACE WHILE YOU WERE PRESENT IN WASHINGTON; IT WOULD BE LESS AWKWARD IF IT HAD ALREADY OCCURRED. BUT IN ANY EVENT IT WOULD PROBABLY BE HELPFUL TO WORK OUR CAREFULLY WHAT ATTITUDE TO ADOPT AND FOR THE AMERICANS TO BE TOLD WHAT WE WERE THINKING OF SAYING.

6. HAIG SAID THAT HE WAS SURE THERE WOULD BE A TREMENDOUS TO-DO AS A RESULT OF OUR INVASION. BUT NO DOUBT AFTER A DAY OR TWO IT WOULD QUIETEN DOWN. HE WAS NOT SURE WHAT THE ULTIMATE CONSEQUENCES WOULD BE. HE SAID THAT HE PERSONALLY UNDERSTOOD WHY WE WERE TAKING THIS ACTION. HE REALISED THE DESIRABILITY OF KEEPING UP MILITARY PRESSURE. THIS WAS CERTAINLY ONE WAY OF DOING IT, BUT IT WOULD OF COURSE INCITE STRONG LATIN AMERICAN INDIGNATION. THIS WOULD RAISE PROBLEMS IN THE RIO TREATY WHICH WE SHOULD DISCUSS LATER.

7. HAIG SAID THAT HE HAD GRAVE DOUBTS ABOUT THE MILITARY EFFICACY OF A LANDING ON THE FALKLAND ISLAND THEMSELVES. BUT HE SAW THE ATTRACTIONS OF WHAT WE WERE GOING TO DO IN SOUTH GEORGIA. FOR WHAT IT IS WORTH, I GOT THE IMPRESSION THAT HE THINKS WE ARE RIGHT TO PROCEED ON THESE LINES, THOUGH IT MAKES HIS OWN NEGOTIATING ROLE MORE DIFFICULT.

8. I SAID I UNDERSTOOD HIS PROBLEM BUT I MUST ASK HIM TO REALISE THAT THE MORE HE EXPRESSED OPPOSITION PUBLICLY TO WHAT WE WERE DOING IN SOUTH GEORGIA, THE GREATER WOULD BE THE RESENTMENT IN THE UK HOWEVER MUCH THIS MIGHT HELP HIM WITH THE ARGENTINIANS.

9. AS OUR CONVERSATION WAS ENDING HAIG RECEIVED A MESSAGE THAT COSTA MENDEZ WAS TRYING TO GET INTO TOUCH WITH HIM. HAIG SUSPECTED THAT THEY MIGHT WELL HAVE GOT WIND OF THE INVASION AND WOULD BE ASKING FOR US INTERVENTION WITH US.

10. I TOLD HAIG THAT OUR DECISION HAD BEEN TAKEN AND THERE COULD BE NO CONCEIVABLE QUESTION OF ITS GOING BACK BECAUSE OF SOME NEW PROPOSAL BY THE ARGENTINIANS. IN ANY VENT WHAT WAS THE PURPOSE OF NEGOTIATING WITH COSTA MENDEZ? HE COULD NOT DELIVER. HAIG AGREED ADDING THAT HE WAS A COMPLETE LIAR.

HENDERSON

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