

44

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29754 - 1

ZZ BUENOS AIRES

GRS 372

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FM FCO 251130Z MAR 82

TO FLASH BUENOS AIRES

TELEGRAM NUMBER 71 OF 25 MARCH

INFO FLASH PORT STANLEY (PERSONAL FOR GOVERNOR)

INFO IMMEDIATE MODUK NAVY, CINCFLEET.

INFO PRIORITY MONTEVIDEO, SANTIAGO, BRASILIA

Aw 040/325/12		
RECEIVED COPY NO. 13		
25 MAR 1982		
DESK OFFICER		REGISTRY
INDEX	PA	Action Taken

(u) YOUR TELNO 99: SOUTH GEORGIA

1. WE ARE IN NO DOUBT ABOUT THE GRAVITY OF THE PRESENT SITUATION AND WE DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE THE CLEAR RISK OF AN ARGENTINE MILITARY RESPONSE (YOUR 24/2030Z) IF ENDURANCE MOVES TO TAKE THE MEN FROM LEITH TO PORT STANLEY. WE ALSO APPRECIATE COSTA MENDEZ'S GENUINE DIFFICULTIES IN PERSUADING HIS MILITARY COLLEAGUES OF THE BENEFITS OF A DIPLOMATIC SOLUTION. WE FOR OUR PART ARE COMMITTED TO ENSURING THE DEPARTURE OF THE ARGENTINES FROM SOUTH GEORGIA AND WE SHALL BE UNDER INCREASING PRESSURE TO CONFIRM THAT THIS HAS BEEN DONE.

2. PLEASE THEREFORE TELL COSTA MENDEZ THAT I STRONGLY URGE HIM TO PERSUADE HIS COLLEAGUES AS A MATTER OF URGENCY TO FIND A WAY OUT OF THIS IMPASSE. WE ARE FACING A POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS CONFRONTATION ON THIS ISSUE, IF WE ARE TO AVOID IT, IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT ARRANGE IMMEDIATELY FOR THE MEN TO BE TAKEN OFF. HOW THEY DO THIS MUST BE FOR THEIR DECISION. BUT THE MEN CANNOT REMAIN ILLEGALLY ON BRITISH TERRITORY. YOU SHOULD AGAIN EMPHASISE THAT THIS SITUATION HAS IN NO WAY BEEN OF OUR SEEKING. WE HAVE NO WISH TO ESCALATE IT AND WE HAVE OVER THE PAST FEW DAYS GIVEN THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT ALL POSSIBLE LATITUDE FOR FINDING A LOW-KEY EXIT TO IT. BUT THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE IN NO DOUBT THAT WE ARE COMMITTED TO THE DEFENCE OF BRITISH SOVEREIGNTY IN SOUTH GEORGIA AS ELSEWHERE.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

29754 - 1

3. PLEASE MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO PERSUADE COSTA MENDEZ OF THE NEED FOR QUICK ACTION. WE DO NOT WANT TO BOX OURSELVES IN BY SETTING DEADLINES. BUT UNLESS BY THE WEEKEND WE HAVE A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING ON A TIMETABLE FOR THE MEN'S REMOVAL, WE SHALL HAVE THE GREATEST DIFFICULTY IN SATISFYING PUBLIC AND PARLIAMENTARY FEELING ON THIS ISSUE. GRATEFUL FOR YOUR URGENT ADVICE, FOLLOWING YOUR MEETING WITH COSTE MENDEZ, ON WHETHER A PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM THE PRIME MINISTER TO GALTIERI AND/OR THE OFFER OF MY SENDING A SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE TO DISCUSS THE WHOLE SITUATION WITH THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT WOULD HELP
4. WE ARE MEANWHILE CONSIDERING THE DEFENCE IMPLICATIONS.

CARRINGTON

STANDARD

SAMD

SED

UND

ESTSD

CABINET OFFICE

ADDITIONAL DISTN
FALKLAND ISLANDS