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FM UKMIS NEW YORK 012025Z APR 82
TO FLASH F C O
TELEGRAM NUMBER 355 OF 1 APRIL 1982

FALKLAND ISLANDS CRISIS

1. WE HAVE PREPARED (BEFORE RECEIPT OF YOUR TELNO 189) THE FOLLOWING DRAFT STATEMENT FOR ME TO DELIVER WHEN THE SECURITY COUNCIL MEETS. I HOPE TO BE ABLE TO STRENGTHEN THE LATTER PART WITH FIRMER EVIDENCE OF ARGENTINE MILITARY INTENTIONS WHEN THE INFORMATION PROMISED IN BUENOS AIRES TELNO 138 REACHES US. MIFT CONTAINS THE DRAFT RESOLUTION REFERRED TO IN THE LAST PARAGRAPH.

2. FOLLOWING IS DRAFT STATEMENT:
BEGINS

MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL WILL HAVE BEFORE THEM THE LETTER WHICH I HAVE ADDRESSED EARLIER TODAY TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL CONCERNING THE SITUATION IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC. AS MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL WILL BE AWARE, THERE HAVE BEEN DIFFERENCES FOR MANY YEARS BETWEEN MY GOVERNMENT AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARGENTINA CONCERNING THE FALKLAND ISLANDS. MY GOVERNMENT HAS ASKED FOR THIS EMERGENCY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL BECAUSE IT NOW HAS REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF ARGENTINA IS PLANNING TO ATTEMPT TO INVADE THESE ISLANDS.

THE FALKLANDS ARE SITUATED IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC, SOME 770 KILOMETRES NORTH EAST OF CAPE HORN. THEY HAVE A POPULATION OF ABOUT 1900 PEOPLE. THESE ARE PEOPLE OF MAINLY BRITISH ORIGIN, MOST OF WHOM HAVE BEEN BORN THERE IN FAMILIES WHICH HAVE LIVED THERE FOR GENERATIONS. THERE IS NO SIGNIFICANT ARGENTINE ELEMENT IN THE POPULATION. THE UK HAS EXERCISED SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE FALKLAND ISLANDS AND THEIR DEPENDENCIES SINCE EARLY IN THE 19TH CENTURY AND CONTINUES TO DO SO TODAY.

FOR SEVERAL YEARS, THE AFFAIRS OF THE FALKLANDS HAVE BEEN DISCUSSED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY. THE FALKLANDS ARE ONE OF THOSE TERRITORIES ABOUT WHICH THE UNITED KINGDOM REPORTS TO THE UNITED NATIONS UNDER ARTICLE 73(E) OF THE CHARTER. AT THE MOST RECENT SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, A DECISION WAS ADOPTED TO THE EFFECT THAT THE COMMITTEE OF 24 SHOULD KEEP THE SITUATION IN THE TERRITORY UNDER REVIEW. THE ASSEMBLY HAS NOT ADOPTED A RESOLUTION ON THE SUBJECT FOR SEVERAL YEARS BUT HAS CONTENTED ITSELF WITH TAKING NOTE OF DEVELOPMENTS.

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ON 25 MARCH AN ARGENTINE NAVAL TRANSPORT VESSEL ARRIVED AT LEITH HARBOUR TO DELIVER FURTHER SUPPLIES TO THE MEN ASHORE. THE BRITISH AMBASSADOR IN BUENOS AIRES SOUGHT AN EARLY RESPONSE FROM THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT TO OUR PREVIOUS REQUESTS THAT THEY SHOULD ARRANGE FOR THE MEN'S DEPARTURE. THIS REQUEST WAS REFUSED. THE BRITISH AMBASSADOR MADE IT CLEAR TO THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT THAT WE WISHED TO DO EVERYTHING WE COULD TO AVOID CONFRONTATION AND PROPOSED THAT IF THE PARTY REQUESTED THE PROPER AUTHORISATION FROM THE BRITISH AUTHORITIES AT GRYTVIKEN THIS WOULD BE GIVEN. NO IMMEDIATE REPLY WAS RECEIVED FROM THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT.

BUT ON 26 MARCH THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT ISSUED A PRESS STATEMENT ANNOUNCING THAT THE ARGENTINE PARTY WOULD BE GIVEN ALL NECESSARY PROTECTION BY THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT. THE ARGENTINE PRESS REPORTED THAT ARGENTINE NAVAL VESSELS HAD BEEN ORDERED INTO THE AREA.

ON 28 MARCH, THE ARGENTINE FOREIGN MINISTER SENT A MESSAGE TO LORD CARRINGTON, THE BRITISH FOREIGN SECRETARY, REJECTING THE BRITISH PROPOSAL TO REGULARISE THE PRESENCE OF THE ARGENTINE CITIZENS IN SOUTH GEORGIA BUT PRESSING INSTEAD FOR DISCUSSION NOT ONLY OF THIS ISSUE BUT ALSO OF THE WIDER SOVEREIGNTY ISSUE.

ON 30 MARCH, STATEMENTS IN BOTH HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT IN LONDON MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT HAD NO WISH TO INTERFERE WITH A STRAIGHTFORWARD COMMERCIAL CONTRACT BUT THAT WE COULD NOT ACCEPT AN ILLEGAL UNAUTHORISED PRESENCE ON BRITISH TERRITORY. THE STATEMENT EMPHASISED OUR WISH TO DEFUSE THE ISSUE AND TO PURSUE A DIPLOMATIC SOLUTION TO IT.

ON 31 MARCH THE BRITISH AMBASSADOR IN BUENOS AIRES PROPOSED TO THE ARGENTINE FOREIGN MINISTER THAT A SENIOR OFFICIAL SHOULD VISIT BUENOS AIRES TO DISCUSS A DIPLOMATIC SOLUTION, ADDING THAT THE DEFUSING OF THIS INCIDENT WOULD HELP PREPARE THE WAY FOR A RESUMPTION OF A DIALOGUE ON THE BROADER SOVEREIGNTY DISPUTE.

EARLIER TODAY, THE ARGENTINE FOREIGN MINISTER GAVE THE REPLY OF HIS GOVERNMENT TO THE BRITISH AMBASSADOR IN BUENOS AIRES. THIS REPLY WAS TO THE EFFECT THAT THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT REGARDED THE MATTER OF SOUTH GEORGIA AS CLOSED AND SAW NO PURPOSE IN AN EMISSARY GOING TO BUENOS AIRES.

MR PRESIDENT, I HAVE DESCRIBED THIS RECENT INCIDENT AFFECTING SOUTH GEORGIA. BUT THE PURPOSE OF MY GOVERNMENT IN CALLING THIS MEETING OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL IS TO CONSIDER THE THREAT NOT TO SOUTH GEORGIA BUT TO THE FALKLAND ISLANDS, WHICH, AS I HAVE ALREADY SAID, ARE MORE THAN 800 MILES AWAY. WE HAVE EVIDENCE THAT THE ARGENTINE NAVY IS ABOUT TO LAUNCH AN INVASION, POSSIBLY AS EARLY AS TOMORROW MORNING. THE ARGENTINE PRESS HAS FOR SEVERAL DAYS BEEN CARRYING NOT ONLY DETAILED ACCOUNTS OF ARGENTINE NAVAL MOVEMENTS BUT ALSO STATEMENTS ABOUT THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THESE MOVEMENTS BY THE ARGENTINE MINISTER OF