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FM BUENOS AIRES 23/1510Z MAR 82

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 90 OF 23 MARCH 1982

AND TO IMMEDIATE PORT STANLEY

Hd/SAMD
Hd/Defence
Hd/News D. 1604

PS
PS/LAS
PS/Rutherford
PS/Mr Luce
PS/PUS
Mr Giffard
Mr Luce.

No 1035
Cab. Office

SOUTH GEORGIA : ARGENTINE PRESS TREATMENT

1. THE ILLEGAL LANDING IN SOUTH GEORGIA IS GIVEN HEADLINE TREATMENT IN TODAY'S LOCAL PRESS. THE TONE VARIES FROM THE FACTUAL (FCO NEWS DEPARTMENT'S STATEMENT OF 22 MARCH IS WIDELY REPRODUCED, AS IS A TERSE STATEMENT ISSUED HERE BY THE MFA LAST NIGHT (SEE BELOW) TO THE HYSTERICAL, AND SOME NEWSPAPERS MAKE CONSIDERABLE PLAY OF AN ALLEGED ATTACK ON THE LADE OFFICE IN PORT STANLEY. THE MORE RESPONSIBLE NEWSPAPERS REFER TO THE LANDING MERELY AS QUOTE AN INCIDENT UNQUOTE, BUT AT THE LOWER END OF THE SCALE, CLARIN'S HEADLINE READS QUOTE SYMBOLIC OCCUPATION OF SOUTH GEORGIA : ARGENTINE GROUP RAISES NATIONAL FLAG, SINGS NATIONAL ANTHEM, THEN DEPARTS UNQUOTE (ITS TEXT ATTRIBUTES THE FLAG INCIDENT SPECIFICALLY TO 14 CREW MEMBERS OF THE BAHIA BUEN SUCESO), WHILE CRONICA'S READS QUOTE BARBAROUS PIRATICAL REACTION : LADE OFFICES ATTACKED UNQUOTE. ALL REPORT THAT THE BAHIA BUEN SUCESO HAS LEFT SOUTH GEORGIA, BUT SOME ALSO QUOTE MFA SOURCES AS CONFIRMING THAT SOME TECHNICAL PERSONNEL STILL REMAIN AT LEITH.

2. THE MFA STATEMENT READS (IN OUR TRANSLATION) AS FOLLOWS:
QUOTE THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT CONCERNS THE PRESS STATEMENT ISSUED BY THE FOREIGN OFFICE ON 22 MARCH.

BY THE FOREIGN OFFICE ON 22 MARCH.

QUOTE THE STN VESSEL BAHIA BUEN SUCESO TRADITIONALLY PLIES BETWEEN PORTS IN PATAGONIA, THE MALVINAS AND OTHER ISLANDS IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC IN FULFILLMENT OF A COMMERCIAL TRANSPORT CONTRACT, DRAWN UP WITH A PRIVATE CONTRACTOR.

QUOTE IT TOOK TO SOUTH GEORGIA VARIOUS EQUIPMENT LOADED BY THE CONTRACTOR, AS WELL AS PERSONNEL INDICATED BY HIM, WHICH HE NEEDED TO CARRY OUT THE PROPOSED WORK ON LAND.

QUOTE ONCE THE TRANSPORT OPERATION HAD BEEN COMPLETED, ON 21 MARCH 1982, THE VESSEL CONTINUED ITS USUAL VOYAGE TOWARDS OTHER PORTS UNQUOTE.

WILLIAMS

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SENT/RECD AT 23/1604Z JL/RRR KRW