

DEYOUTOP SECRET

FM WASHINGTON 211615Z

5.

TO FLASH FCO TEL NO 1376 OF 21/4

YOUR TEL NO 779: FALKLANDS

1. HAIG'S IMMEDIATE REACTION, WHEN I TOLD HIM, WAS ONE OF SURPRISE AND CONCERN. HE SAID THAT HE KNEW THAT SOME OF OUR SHIPS WERE HEADING THAT WAY BUT HIS INFORMATION HAD BEEN THAT THEY WERE HOLDING OFF SOME ONE HUNDRED MILES AWAY FROM SOUTH GEORGIA. HE THOUGHT THAT OUR PROPOSED ACTION WOULD AGGRAVATE THE PROBLEM AND MAKE A RETURN TO NEGOTIATION MORE DIFFICULT. HE ASKED WHETHER OUR DECISION WAS FINAL. HE WOULD KEEP THE INFORMATION TO HIMSELF, EXCEPT THAT HE WOULD TELL THE PRESIDENT.
2. I EMPHASISED THE NEED FOR ABSOLUTE SECURITY, SAID THAT THE DECISION WAS FINAL AND I WAS NOT CONSULTING BUT INFORMING HIM, AND THAT WHAT WE WERE DOING WAS CONSISTENT WITH HIS ADVICE TO US THAT IT WAS ESSENTIAL TO KEEP UP OUR MILITARY PRESSURE ON THE ARGENTINES.
3. HAIG SAID THAT HE AGREED IN PRINCIPLE AND HE THOUGHT THAT SOUTH GEORGIA WAS A PLUM READY TO BE PICKED. BUT HE WAS WORRIED AT THE PRESENCE OF 40 ARGENTINE MARINES THERE AGAINST WHICH, SO HE UNDERSTOOD, WE WOULD ONLY HAVE A HUNDRED. HE DID NOT DISAGREE THAT MILITARY PRESSURE WAS NECESSARY BUT HE HAD HOPED THAT ANY MILITARY MOVE BY US WOULD BE HELD UP UNTIL YOUR MEETING WITH HIM HERE AND SOME POSSIBLE FOLLOW-UP FROM IT.
4. THIS LEAD ME TO ASK WHAT SORT OF FOLLOW-UP HE WAS THINKING OF. ASSUMING THAT WHEN YOU SAW HIM YOU EXPLAINED THE UNACCEPTABILITY OF THE VARIOUS ARGENTINIAN PROPOSALS, AND INDICATED THE SORT OF LINE THAT MIGHT BE ACCEPTABLE FOR US, WAS HE THINKING OF FLYING BACK TO BUENOS AIRES AGAIN AND HAVING YET ANOTHER ROUND OF NEGOTIATION? HE SAID NO. BUT COSTA MENDEZ WOULD BE COMING HERE FOR THE RIO TREATY, WHICH IS EXPECTED TO MEET AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL ON MONDAY 26 APRIL, AND HE WAS THINKING PERHAPS THERE COULD BE SOME MEETING AT WHICH YOU AND COSTA MENDEZ WOULD BE PRESENT. I SAID, SPEAKING FOR MYSELF, THAT I THOUGHT THAT THIS WAS QUITE OUT OF THE QUESTION. YOU COULD NOT CONCEIVABLY MEET ACROSS THE TABLE WITH COSTA MENDEZ IN PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES. TO WHICH HAIG SAID THAT THE MEETING COULD PERHAPS TAKE PLACE IN SEPARATE ROOMS.
5. I WENT ON TO SAY THAT IT SEEMED TO ME THAT THERE WAS NO POINT WHATEVER IN TALKING TO COSTA MENDEZ. HE COULD NOT DELIVER. HAIG SAID HE ENTIRELY AGREED. HE WENT ON TO TALK ABOUT HIS NEGOTIATING EXPERIENCES IN BUENOS AIRES, ABOUT WHICH PLEASE SEE M I F T.

TOP SECRET

6. AFTER HE HAD HAD TIME TO THINK ABOUT IT A BIT LONGER, HAIG SEEMED TO ME TO COME ROUND MORE IN SUPPORT OF OUR PROPOSED ACTION. HE QUITE SAW THE NEED FOR US TO SHOW FIRMNESS, WHICH WAS ALL THAT THE ARGENTINE LEADERS WOULD UNDERSTAND. THEY WERE COMPLETELY INDIFFERENT IN THEIR PRESENT MOOD TO ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL PRESSURE. HE HIMSELF WOULD HAVE DONE THE SAME, THOUGH HE REPEATED HIS HOPE THAT IT COULD HAVE PERHAPS AWAITED YOUR TALKS HERE. HOWEVER, HE DID NOT AT ALL PRESS THIS. ALTHOUGH HE SEES IT AS CHANGING THE PICTURE AND INTRODUCING ADDITIONAL COMPLICATIONS IN THE RIO MACHINERY, HE IS, I THINK, UNDERSTANDING ABOUT OUR INTENTIONS.

7. I HAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT HAIG WILL BE TRYING TO ARRANGE A MEETING BETWEEN YOU AND THE PRESIDENT: BUT NOTHING IS BEING SAID PUBLICLY ABOUT THIS FOR THE MOMENT.

HENDERSON

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