

ADVANCE COPIES: FALKLAND ISLANDS

(29)

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FROM UKMIS GENEVA 261500Z APR 82
 TO IMMEDIATE FCO
 TELNO 187 OF 26 APRIL
 INFO WASHINGTON, BERNE, MONTEVIDEO

YOUR TELNO 95: FALKLAND ISLANDS AND ICRC

1. ACTION TAKEN ON PARAGRAPH 1 WITH THE DEPUTY HEAD OF OPERATIONS, ICRC ON 25 APRIL. CONVERS SAID THAT THIS PARAGRAPH FULLY REFLECTED ICRC'S OWN PRIORITIES. HE CONFIRMED THAT THE ICRC HAD LAST WEEK MADE THEIR FRESH APPROACH TO THE ARGENTINE AUTHORITIES IN THE CONTEXT OF ARTICLE 14 OF THE 4TH CONVENTION (PARAGRAPH 4 OF MY TELNO 176), BUT SO FAR WITHOUT RESULT.

2. CONVERS NOTED THE ARGENTINE FOREIGN MINISTERS REMARK ON 25 APRIL THAT THE LANDINGS IN SOUTH GEORGIA MEANT THAT ARGENTINA WAS NOW AT WAR. HEAD OF CHANCERY SAID OUR VIEW WAS THAT THIS WAS AN INITIAL AND PERHAPS PERSONAL REACTION AND THAT WE WERE LOOKING FOR A MORE AUTHORITYATIVE VIEW FROM BUENOS AIRES. HE CONFIRMED THAT HMG DID NOT(NOT) CONSIDER THEMSELVES TO BE AT WAR WITH ARGENTINA AT PRESENT. CONVERS SAID THAT THE ICRC HAD REPORTS FROM THEIR OWN PEOPLE IN BUENOS AIRES THAT REACTIONS THERE WERE MORE NUANCE THAN THAT GIVEN BY COSTA MENDEZ. HE ADDED THAT EVEN IF STATES CONDUCTING HOSTILITIES DID NOT CONSIDER THEMSELVES TO BE AT WAR THERE WAS STILL A ROLE FOR ICRC IN LOOKING AFTER VICTIMS, WHETHER MILITARIES, WOUNDED OR CIVILIANS WHO MIGHT NEED HELP AND PROTECTION.

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3. THIS LED INTO THE QUESTION OF SOUTH GEORGIA. CONVERS ASKED US TO PROVIDE ICRC WITH INFORMATION, IN PARTICULAR ABOUT THE IDENTITY AND HEALTH OF ANY MEMBERS OF THE ARGENTINIAN FORCES STILL ON THE ISLAND AND OUR INTENTIONS TOWARDS THEM. THE DETAILS SHOULD BE IF POSSIBLE ON THE LINES OF THE PRO FORMA IN THE 3RD GENEVA CONVENTION. FULL NAMES, NUMBERS, RANKS AND DATES OF BIRTH WERE THE FIRST PRIORITY. NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF NEXT OF KIN WOULD ALSO BE USEFUL WHEN COMMUNICATIONS ALLOWED. HE NOTED THE BRITISH PRESS REPORTS THAT THE DAMAGED SUBMARINE WAS STILL AT GRYTVIKEN. IT WAS FOR US TO DECIDE ABOUT OUR INTENDED HANDLING OF ANY ARGENTINIAN PRISONERS, WHETHER TO DELIVER THEM TO ARGENTINA OR NEUTRAL TERRITORY, OR KEEP THEM IN OUR OWN CUSTODY. IN THE LIGHT OF OUR DECISION ON THESE MATTERS THE ICRC WOULD DECIDE ON THEIR OWN POLICY IN CARRYING OUT THEIR FUNCTION OF PROTECTION. HE NOTED THAT THE ARGENTINIANS HAD RELEASED THE 22 MARINES AND 13 SCIENTISTS FROM SOUTH GEORGIA ON THE DAY WHICH ICRC HAD SET THEMSELVES AS THE LATEST POSSIBLE DATE, AFTER WHICH THOSE CONCERNED WOULD HAVE TO BE CONSIDERED PRISONERS OF WAR. HE EMPHASISED THAT THE ICRC HAD NO INTENTION TO TAKE ANY ACTION WHICH COULD HAVE NEGATIVE POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES, SUBJECT TO THE OVER-RIDING NEED TO RESPECT THE INTERESTS OF ANY VICTIMS OF THE CONFLICT. HE NOTED THAT WE WERE STILL IN A SITUATION SHORT OF WAR IN WHICH NEGOTIATIONS WERE CONTINUING.

4. WITH REFERENCE TO PARAGRAPH 3 OF TUR, ICRC HAVE THREE OFFICES IN CENTRAL AMERICA AND A FURTHER ONE IN BOGOTA WHICH IS AT PRESENT VACANT. THEIR ONLY OTHER LATIN AMERICAN REPRESENTATION IS AT BUENOS AIRES WHERE THERE ARE FIVE EX-PATRIATE STAFF COVERING ARGENTINA, CHILE, PERU, PARAGUAY, URUGUAY, AND BRAZIL.

5. LONG ASKED WHETHER ICRC HAD DEVELOPED ANY PLANS ABOUT HOW TO ORGANISE SECURE ZONES IN THE FALKLAND ISLANDS (PARA 4 OF MY TELNO 176). CONVERS SAID THEY WERE IN TOUCH ON THIS SUBJECT WITH MRS HUNT THROUGH THE BRITISH RED CROSS. SHE HAD SUGGESTED THAT THE VILLAGE OF FITZROY 15 MILES FROM PORT STANLEY MIGHT BE A SUITABLE CENTRE. CONVERS ADDED THAT THE ICRC WOULD VERY MUCH VALUE ANY UP TO DATE MAPS OF THE FALKLAND ISLANDS WHICH WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO SUPPLY FOR ICRC USE.

MARSHALL