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CONFIDENTIAL

SANTIAGO DESKBY 252100Z

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TO FLASH FCO
TELNO 192 OF 25 JUNE
AND TO IMMEDIATE SANTIAGO

JOURNALISTS IN USHUAIA

THE FOLLOWING IS OUR TRANSLATION OF THE TEXT OF A FLASH TELEGRAM WHICH THE SWISS FDFA HAVE RECEIVED FROM THE SWISS AMBASSADOR IN BUENOS AIRES AND PASSED TO US AT 1700Z HOURS GMT TODAY (25 JUNE) FOR ONWARD TRANSMISSION TO YOU:

1841

BEGINS

BEGINS

A.

IN AGREEMENT WITH THE FEDERAL PROCURATOR OF TIERRA DEL FUEGO, JUDGE SAGASTUME AT USHUAIA, HAS NOTIFIED BALABAN, THE LAWYER, OF HIS WRITTEN AGREEMENT CONCERNING THE RELEASE ON BAIL OF ONE HUNDRED MILLION PESOS FOR EACH OF THE JOURNALISTS, (IE A TOTAL OF ABOUT TWENTY THOUSAND DOLLARS AT THE OFFICIAL RATE).

2. THE JUDGE HAS ALSO AUTHORISED THE ABOVEMENTIONED TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY ON AN UNDERTAKING TO RETURN AT HIS REQUEST IF THE COURT SHOULD REQUIRE IT, FAILING WHICH THEY WOULD FORFEIT THEIR BAIL AND THE RIGHT TO ENTER ARGENTINA FOR A PERIOD OF EIGHT YEARS.

3. BALABAN, WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF MISS J. HILTON CORRESPONDENT OF THE SUNDAY TIMES WHO RECENTLY ACCOMPANIED HIM TO USHUAIA, IS AT PRESENT ENGAGED IN ARRANGING WITH A LOCAL BANK FOR THE NECESSARY FUNDS FOR THE PAYMENT OF BAIL, WHICH HE PROPOSES TO SEND PERSONALLY TO THE JUDGE AT USHUAIA ON MONDAY 28 JUNE, ON WHICH DATE HIS THREE CLIENTS WOULD BE SET FREE.

4. BALABAN WILL SEND US SHORTLY FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE BRITISH AUTHORITIES A COPY OF THE DOCUMENTS IN HIS POSSESSION RELATING TO THESE ARRANGEMENTS.

B.

WINCHESTER, CONTACTED BY TELEPHONE TODAY, HAS GIVEN US THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION. BECAUSE OF THE UNCERTAIN POLITICAL SITUATION, AND LEST THE AUTHORITIES IN BUENOS AIRES MIGHT BRING POSSIBLE PRESSURE TO BEAR TO CHANGE THE DECISION TAKEN BY THE LEGAL AUTHORITIES IN TIERRA DEL FUEGO, WISHES WITH HIS TWO COLLEAGUES TO LEAVE ARGENTINE TERRITORY VIA CHILE, IMMEDIATELY UPON THEIR RELEASE. THEIR PLAN IS AS FOLLOWS: LEAVE MONDAY 28 JUNE BY TAXI FOR SAN SEBASTIAN, (A FRONTIER TOWN WHERE THEY WOULD SPEND THE NIGHT SEMI COLON LENGTH OF JOURNEY ABOUT SIX HOURS). THEN BY FERRY TO PUNTA ARENAS AND FROM THERE BY AIR TO SANTIAGO (ARRIVAL WEDNESDAY 30 JUNE), FOLLOWED BY DEPARTURE FOR LONDON THE SAME DAY IF POSSIBLE.

THE ABOVEMENTIONED ARE OF THE OPINION THAT TO RETURN TO BUENOS AIRES AND TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY FROM THAT CITY COULD GIVE RISE TO PUBLICITY

THE ABOVEMENTIONED ARE OF THE OPINION THAT TO RETURN TO BUENOS AIRES AND TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY FROM THAT CITY COULD GIVE RISE TO PUBLICITY WHICH COULD CAUSE THEN TROUBLE. WINCHESTER HAS ALSO INDICATED THAT THE LEGAL AUTHORITIES HAVE RETURNED THEIR PASSPORTS AND PERSONAL EFFECTS EXCEPT PHOTOGRAPHIC EQUIPMENT, WHICH WILL BE RETURNED TO THEM WHEN THEY LEAVE PRISON. THE SUNDAY TIMES IN LONDON IS AWARE OF THIS PLAN AND READY TO MAKE THE NECESSARY RESERVATIONS FOR THE FLIGHT FROM SANTIAGO TO LONDON.

C.

DISCUSSION OF DAYER (COUNSELLOR IN THE SWISS EMBASSY) WITH BALABAN REGARDING THE PLAN FOR THIS JOURNEY.

BALABAN IS PREPARED TO ACCOMPANY HIS CLIENTS AS FAR AS SAN SEBASTIAN AND IF APPROPRIATE TO SANTIAGO. NOR DOES HE FORESEE DIFFICULTIES IN OBTAINING, FROM THE AUTHORITIES IN TIERRA DEL FUEGO, THE NECESSARY PROTECTION ON ARGENTINE TERRITORY, SINCE THESE AUTHORITIES HAVE IN HIS OPINION A GREAT INTEREST IN DISENGAGING THEMSELVES AS SOON AS POSSIBLE FROM THIS DELICATE AFFAIRE.

IT SEEMS DESIRABLE THAT IN ORDER TO ENSURE THE MAXIMUM SECURITY ON CHILEAN TERRITORY

THE BRITISH EMBASSY IN SANTIAGO SHOULD HANDLE THE ORGANISATION OF THE JOURNEY FROM SAN SEBASTIAN.

*Approved
not*

D.

IN VIEW OF THE PARTICULARLY UNCERTAIN CONDITIONS HERE THIS PLAN SEEMS TO ME TO OFFER ADEQUATE SAFEGUARDS. GRATEFUL IF YOU WOULD TELEGRAPH AS SOON AS POSSIBLE THE POSITION OF THE BRITISH AUTHORITIES ON THIS MATTER.

BODMER

ENDS.

PCWELL-JONES

*Approved, and do everything
humanly possible to get the
journalists home
not*

NNNN

SENT AT RECD AT 251841Z SAJ/JB