

SECRET

VWJ
O 230327Z MAR 82
FM HMS ENDURANCE
TO MODUK NAVY
CINCFLEET
BT
SECRET SPOKE
SIC EAL
BT

080619 Mr Halse
25 MAR 1982

P. G. Hood
perry

n/r

1. FOLLOWING FCO 221430Z MAR (PASEP), MY EAL 221335Z MAR (NO REPLY YET) AND MODUK LOQ/W4A/A3A 222028Z MAR, YOU MAY WISH TO CONSIDER SOME OF THE FOLLOWING BACKGROUND INFORMATION BEFORE ISSUING MY INSTRUCTIONS ON ACTION TO BE TAKEN ON ARRIVAL LEITH.
2. IN JANUARY 1982 I INDICATED THAT THE VISIT OF THE ARGENTINE NAVAL ICEBREAKER ADMIRANTE IRIZAR TO LEITH WAS PARTICULARLY IRREGULAR NOT ONLY WAS DIPCLEAR NOT SOUGHT, THE SHIP DID NOT CALL AT GRYTVIKEN, DAVIDOFF WAS EMBARKED AND RADIO SILENCE WAS OBSERVED FOR SEVERAL DAYS BEFORE THE VISIT. AT THAT STAGE IT WAS CLEAR THAT DAVIDOFF WAS WORKING WITH THE ARGENTINE NAVY.
3. CAPTAIN TROMBETA OF THE IRIZAR AND ALSO SO ANTARCTIC, WHOM I KNOW PERSONALLY AND LIKE, WAS EMBARRASSED WHEN I SPOKE TO HIM LATER (RADIO CONVERSATION) HE SOUNDED AWKWARD AND COMPOUNDED HIS DECEPTION WHEN HE TOLD ME THAT HE WAS GOING TO AN ANTARCTIC BASE BELGRANO WHEN HE IN FACT WENT TO THE ARGENTINE BASE ON THE BRITISH ISLAND OF SOUTHERN THULE.
4. IN RECENT WEEKS ON 3 (THREE) OCCASIONS ARGENTINE C130 (ONE-THREE-ZERO) AIRCRAFT HAVE OVERFLOWN SOUTH GEORGIA PRESUMABLY ON RECONAISSANCE MISSIONS AS SOUTH GEORGIA IS FAR FROM THE ROUTE FROM SOUTHERN ARGENTINE TO MARAMBIO BASE (NE ANTARCTIC PENINSULA).
5. BEFORE BAHIA BUEN SUCESO ARRIVED AT LEITH AND INDEED THROUGHOUT HER STAY SHE TOO OBSERVED A STRICT RADIO (H/F) SILENCE. ONLY ON SAILING DURING THE EARLY HOURS THIS MORNING DID THE ARGENTINE NAVY ALLOW THE SHIP TO LIFT RADIO SILENCE FINALLY CONGRATULATING HER ON A MISSION WELL ACCOMPLISHED.
6. I DO NOT WISH TO EXAGGERATE THIS SITUATION BUT ARGENTINA HAS BEEN FLEXING HER MUSCLES OVER THE SOVEREIGNTY OF THE DEPENDENCIES AND IT IS WELL KNOWN THAT SOUTH GEORGIA COULD BECOME IMPORTANT IN THE FUTURE. THEREFORE TO USE DAVIDOFF AS A SCAPEGOAT TOWARDS FUTHERING ASPIRATIONS WAS A GOOD OPPORTUNITY TO TEST BRITISH REACTION.
7. MANY OF THE AGREED INSTRUCTIONS HAVE BEEN IGNORED AS HEGFI STATED IN HIS TEL NUMBER 45 22 MAR. FUTHERMORE TO FIRE SHOTS EVEN AT REINDEER AND TO HOIST THE ARGENTINE FLAG SHOWS A BLATANT DISREGARD FOR BRITISH AUTHORITY. THIS HAS ALL THE TRAPPINGS OF A CUNNING PLOT.
8. IN MY VIEW AND THAT OF HEGFI IT WOULD BE IMPRUDENT TO CONSIDER DAVIDOFF AS QUOTE 'JUST A COMMERCIAL CONTRACTOR FAILING TO OBTAIN THE REQUIRED AUTHORISATION AND MAKING AN ILLEGAL LANDING' UNQUOTE (AS IN FCO 221430) CONSIDERABLE PLANNING HAS GONE INTO THIS OPERATION AND I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO GIVE YOU THIS UPDATE BEFORE MY INSTRUCTIONS ARE ISSUED.

BT

/Yes.....

SECRET

Yes. But the points in paras 3-5 cannot be disregarded. Whatever the Argentines may say, there is no evidence that this operation has been undertaken with the full knowledge and probably guidance of the Argentine Navy. Whatever we may wish to say publicly, the Argentine Government cannot be exonerated.

P R F 23 March 1982

- 1) Copies to: PS
PS/Mr Luce
PS/PUS
Defence Department ✓
Mr Giffard
Mr Ure
- 2) Mr Chase
Bright