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FM BUENOS AIRES 1/0015Z DEC 80

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 278 OF 30 NOVEMBER VPP

AND TO PRIORITY PORT STANLEY

FROM FEARN

Aw 040/325/12		
RECEIVED IN REGISTRY NO. 18		
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DESK OFFICER		REGISTRY
INDEX	PA	Action Taken

PORT STANLEY TELNO 183: FALKLAND ISLANDS: MR RIDLEY'S VISIT

1. MR RIDLEY HELD FINAL MEETING WITH COUNCILLORS BEFORE DEPARTURE ON 29 NOVEMBER. DISCUSSION WAS INCONCLUSIVE WITH
 * ABSENT *
 MOST COUNCILLORS (MONK AND LUXTON) TAKING COVER AND RELUCTANT TO TAKE A PERSONAL POSITION ON NEGOTIATING OPTIONS. IT WAS LEFT THAT COUNCILLORS WOULD GIVE THEIR VIEWS AT NEXT JOINT COUNCIL, NOW PLANNED FOR 6 JANUARY.

2. COUNCILLORSS GENERAL ASSESSMENT WAS THAT OF THOSE IN PORT STANLEY WHO HAD ALREADY DECLARED THEIR VIEWS THE MAJORITY WAS STRONGLY OPPOSED TO LEASEBACK CONCEPT OR TO ANY NEGOTIATIONS ON SOVEREIGNTY, ALTHOUGH COMMERCIAL SECTORS AND THOSE IN OUTLYING SETTLEMENTS TOOK MORE POSITIVE VIEW OF NEED FOR EARLY NEGOTIATED SOLUTION. THERE WAS HOWEVER REAL DIVISION OF OPINION AND EVERYONE NEEDED MORE TIME FOR THOUGHT. OPPOSITION TO LEASEBACK RESTED PRINCIPALLY ON EMOTIONAL HOSTILITY TO ANY IDEA OF CEDING FULL SOVEREIGNTY. BUT DISTRUST OF ARGENTINE GOOD FAITH AND OF **
 **
 GUARANTEES FOR A LEASEBACK AGREEMENT, LACK OF RECENT EVIDENCE

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/OF ARGENTINE

OF ARGENTINE PRESSURE AND WORRY OVER UK SETTLEMENT RIGHTS OF
NON-PATRIAL ISLANDERS WERE CONTRIBUTORY FACTORS. SOME
COUNCILLORS THOUGHT THAT MOST ISLANDERS WOULD PREFER TO SEE
NO SUBSTANTIVE DIALOGUE WITH ARGENTINA AND TO FACE CONSEQUENCES
OF ARGENTINE RETALIATION.

3. MR RIDLEY MADE CLEAR THAT NEED FOR MORE TIME FOR THOUGHT
WAS FULLY RECOGNISED. NO-ONE WAS BEING HUSTLED. BUT WE HAD
IN DUE COURSE TO RESPOND TO ARGENTINE REQUIREMENT FOR SUBSTANTIVE
NEGOTIATIONS AND IT WAS ESSENTIAL TO KNOW WHAT ISLANDERS WANTED
DONE: CLEAR ADVICE THROUGH GOVERNOR OF COUNCILLORS' AND PUBLIC
CONSENSUS WAS NEEDED. COUNCILLORS SHOULD GIVE LEAD AND WORK TO
DISCOVER VIEWS OF ALL, NOT JUST VOCAL MINORITY. PROBLEM OF DISPUTE
WOULD NOT GO AWAY. IF ISLANDERS REJECTED ANY SUBSTANTIVE
NEGOTIATIONS ON SOVEREIGNTY, A FURTHER MEETING WITH ARGENTINA MIGHT
BE NECESSARY TO EXPLAIN POSITION AND MINIMISE REACTIONS. HMG WOULD
CONTINUE TO HELP AND SUPPORT; BUT THERE WAS NO BOTTOMLESS PIT OF
RESOURCES. ISLANDS EITHER WENT BACKWARDS - OR FORWARD THROUGH A
NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT.

4. IN FINAL RADIO BROADCAST ON 29 NOVEMBER MR RIDLEY CONCENTRATED ON
HMG'S WISH GENUINELY TO SEEK ISLANDER OPINION: ON NEED FOR CLEAR
APPRECIATION OF EFFECTS OF DISPUTE AND FOR THOROUGH AND CAREFUL DEBATE
ON WHAT SHOULD BE DONE.

5. ON DEPARTURE AT AIRPORT THERE WAS A DEMONSTRATION OF "KEEP
FALKLANDS BRITISH" VARIETY, WHICH MAY GET UK PUBLICITY: IT WAS
HOWEVER WELL-BEHAVED, NOT PARTICULARLY HOSTILE AND WITH MORE WATCHING
THAN PARTICIPATING.

6. FOR ASSESSMENT SEE MIFT. * — (57)

WILLIAMS

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FALKLAND ISLANDS