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FM BUENOS AIRES 03/1825Z DEC 80

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 283 OF 3 DECEMBER 1980

INFO PRIORITY PORT STANLEY

ALW 040/325/12		
RECEIVED IN REGISTRY NO. 18		
10 DEC 1980		
DESK OFFICER		REGISTRY
INDEX	PA	Action Taken
THE PRESS	COVERAGE	

MY TELNO 275: THE FALKLANDS: ARGENTINE

1. THE NEWSPAPERS HAVE REPORTED EXTENSIVELY AND FAIRLY ACCURATELY ON THE MINISTER'S DEPARTURE FROM PORT STANLEY, (WITHOUT PLAYING UP THE SMALL DEMONSTRATION AT THE AIRPORT), AND HIS RETURN THROUGH BUENOS AIRES. IN ADDITION CLARIN, LA PRENSA AND LA NACION HAVE NOW COMMENTED ON THE SUGGESTION PUT TO THE ISLANDERS.
2. A SIGNED ARTICLE BY THE CLARIN JOURNALIST WHO TRAVELLED WITH MR RIDLEY LAST YEAR SAYS THAT THE NEW BRITISH MOVE, BASED ON BRITISH INSISTENCE ON SELF-DETERMINATION, SEEMS TO HAVE MADE THE POSSIBILITY OF ANGLO/ARGENTINE AGREEMENT ON THE FALKLANDS EVEN MORE DISTANT. IT IS TIME TO INSIST ON JUST ONE SOLUTION- THE COMPLETE RETURN OF THE ISLANDS TO ARGENTINA. THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT, SAYS THE ARTICLE, HAVE MADE OBVIOUS EFFORTS TO KEEP SILENT TO PREVENT A DETERIORATION IN BILATERAL RELATIONS.
3. UNDER THE HEADING QUOTE STRANGE PROPOSALS UNQUOTE AN EDITORIAL OF 2 DECEMBER IN THE INDEPENDENT LA PRENSA BUILDS AROUND EXTRACTS OF MR RIDLEY'S SPEECH IN STANLEY TOWN HALL. THEY CONFUSE THE ISSUE BY MISQUOTING HIM AS SAYING THAT HE BELIEVED LEASE-BACK HAD NO CHANCE OF ACCEPTANCE IN BRITAIN AND THEN SPECULATING ON THE MINISTER'S INTENTION, IN AIRING IT. THEY SUGGEST THAT HMG GAVE THE PROPOSAL ONLY UNOFFICIAL STATUS IN ORDER TO SOUND OUT ARGENTINE AS WELL AS ISLANDER REACTIONS. THE EDITORIAL MAKES THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS ABOUT THE IDEA OF LEASE-BACK:

- (A) DOES MR RIDLEY BELIEVE HE IS TALKING OF A 19TH CENTURY ARGENTINA, WHEN PRESIDENT ROSAS OFFERED TO SELL BRITAIN THE FALKLANDS IN PAYMENT OF A LOAN FROM BARING BROTHERS?
- (B) THE ONLY NEW ELEMENT, BRITISH RECOGNITION OF ARGENTINE RIGHTS TO THE SOVEREIGNTY OF THE ISLANDS, WAS OFFSET BY THE INSULT OF INSISTENCE UPON ONLY SYMBOLIC SOVEREIGNTY FOR ARGENTINA. THIS CANNOT BE THE PRICE OF LEASING THE ISLANDS TO BRITAIN FOR PERHAPS 999 YEARS.
- (C) THE IDEA LACKS GOOD SENSE, TASTE OR EVEN DECENCY.
- (D) THE SUGGESTION INVITES REACTION RATHER THAN THOUGHT. DOES LONDON WISH THIS REACTION TO BE GIVEN FREE REIN, OUT OF CONTROL? BUT BECAUSE OF THE ARGUMENTS (IN FAVOUR OF HER CLAIM) ARGENTINA HAS NO NEED TO RESORT TO SHOUTING.
- (E) THE REAL BRITISH INTEREST IN THE FALKLANDS WAS EVIDENT FROM MR RIDLEY'S REMARKS ABOUT THE ADVANTAGES OF LEASE-BACK - IT IS ACCESS TO FISH AND OIL.

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4. EDITORIAL OF 3 DECEMBER IN LA NACION MAKES THE FOLLOWING POINTS:-

(A) IT IS REASONABLE TO SUSPECT THAT BRITAIN WANTED MR RIDLEY'S VISIT AND SUGGESTIONS TO BE WELL PUBLICISED. WHAT HE SAID IN THE FALKLANDS WAS ADVANCE NOTICE OF THE BRITISH POSITION IN THE NEXT NEGOTIATING ROUND.

(B) IT SHOULD BE UNDER-LINED THAT MR RIDLEY AND THUS HMG ACCEPTED ARGENTINE SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE ISLANDS.

(C) IN RESPONSE TO MR RIDLEY'S PUBLIC REMARKS ABOUT A FREEZE AND THE CONDITION WHICH ARGENTINA MIGHT IMPOSE (ACCESS TO FISH AND ANY OIL), ARGENTINA WOULD NEVER ACCEPT SUCH A BARTER. IF ARGENTINE SOVEREIGNTY IS RECOGNISED, IT CANNOT BE DIVIDED SO AS TO EXCLUDE ITS MARITIME ASPECTS. FISH, AND ANY OIL THAT MAY EXIST, AROUND THE FALKLANDS ARE ALSO PART OF THE ARGENTINE NATIONAL HERITAGE.

(D) ARGENTINA CAN HARDLY LEASE TO THE INTRUDER WHAT HE OCCUPIES UNJUSTLY, AND WITH IT THE RIGHT TO ACT FREELY WITHIN THE 200 MILE MARITIME ZONE QUOTE WITHOUT PERMISSION AND WITHOUT CONCESSIONS UNQUOTE, AS MR RIDLEY PUT IT IN HIS TOWN HALL SPEECH. THE WEALTH OF THE SEA IN THAT PART OF THE ATLANTIC IS SOLELY ARGENTINE. THERE IS NO POSSIBILITY OF AGREEMENT IF THIS FACT IS IGNORED. NOTHING WILL INDUCE ARGENTINA TO RENOUNCE THE AUTHORITY SHE SEEKS TO EXERCISE OVER THE LAND AND SEA OF THE ISLANDS.

5. THE ONLY PUBLIC REACTION FROM THE GOVERNMENT REMAINS THE STATEMENT BY THE FOREIGN MINISTER ON HIS RETURN TO BUENOS AIRES FROM THE OAS MEETING. BRIGADIER PASTOR SAID THAT SEVERAL ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEM WERE BEING CONTEMPLATED BY THE GOVERNMENT BUT THAT IT WAS NOT THE TIME TO MAKE THEM PUBLIC.

6. SEE MIFT.

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FALKLAND ISLANDS