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FM PARIS 091438Z APR 82

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 331 OF 9 APRIL 1982

FALKLANDS: FRENCH PRESS COMMENT, 9 APRIL

1. THE FRENCH PRESS CONTINUES TO GIVE WIDE COVERAGE OF THE FALKLANDS CRISIS. MOST PAPERS DETECT A SOFTENING IN THE ARGENTINIAN POSITION WHILE BRITAIN'S REACTIONS CONTINUE TO BE SEEN AS FIRM. THE HAIG MISSION IS GIVEN CONSIDERABLE SPACE; SEVERAL PAPERS UNDERLINE MRS THATCHER'S REMARKS THAT HAIG COMES AS AN ALLY AND A FRIEND, NOT AS A MEDIATOR.

2. LE MATIN (SOCIALIST) CLAIMS THAT THE BRITISH DECLARATION OF A "WAR ZONE" AND MR NOTT'S STATEMENT THAT BRITAIN WOULD FIRE FIRST HAD RAISED THE TENSION AND THE DECLARATION OF THE 200 MILE ZONE HAD SUPRISED OBSERVERS (CF. ISNARD IN LE MONDE - MY TELNO 330). LE MATIN ALSO REFERS TO FRANCE'S INTERESTS IN PRESERVING HER OWN OVERSEAS POSSESSIONS. AN ARTICLE BY ONE OF LE MATIN'S EDITORS ARGUES THAT IT WAS WRONG TO SPEAK OF THE

MY TELNO 33φ). LE MATIN ALSO REFERS TO FRANCE'S INTERESTS IN PRESERVING HER OWN OVERSEAS POSSESSIONS. AN ARTICLE BY ONE OF LE MATIN'S EDITORS ARGUES THAT IT WAS WRONG TO SPEAK OF THE FALKLANDERS AS OPPRESSED PEOPLE OR OF THE CRISIS AS "A COLONIAL OR FRONTIER CONFLICT: WE ARE TALKING ABOUT TWO DIFFERENT WAYS OF BEHAVIOUR IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS." THE ARTICLE COMPARES GALTIERI WITH IDI AMIN AND KADHAFI, AND CONCLUDES THAT "BRITISH DEMOCRACY IS MORE VALUABLE IN OUR (FRENCH) EYES THAN AN OPPRESSIVE ANTIPODEAN DICTATORSHIP WHICH TREATS OUR VALUES WITH CONTEMPT." LA CROIS (CATHOLIC CENTRIST) CRITICISES THE SOVIET POSITION AND CONCLUDES THAT IT WAS HARDLY SURPRISING IF THE SOVIET UNION SUPPORTED ARGENTINA AS LEFT WING AND RIGHT WING DICTATORSHIPS BOTH HAD THE SAME CONTEMPT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS.

3. CLAIRE TREAN, WRITING IN LE MONDE DATED 1φ APRIL, CLAIMS THAT THE TEMPERATURE IN BRITAIN HAD FALLEN AND THAT THE FALKLANDS WERE BEING FORGOTTEN AS THE BRITISH WENT OFF FOR THEIR EASTER WEEKEND. SHE REPORTS THAT "REASON HAS RETURNED" AND THAT A PART OF PUBLIC OPINION WAS ASKING ITSELF ABOUT THE COSTS AND LIKELY RESULT OF THE NAVAL EXPEDITION. SHE SAYS NEVERTHELESS THAT THE MAJORITY OF THE BRITISH AGREE WITH THE DESPATCH OF THE FORCE.

FRETWELL.

NNNN

SENT/RECD 441 AND 442 AT 09/1600Z PJC/