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C O N F I D E N T I A L

FM WASHINGTON 091850Z APR 82

TO IMMEDIATE F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 1215 OF 9 APRIL

INFO PRIORITY OTTAWA

Handwritten initials: MS.

FALKLANDS: ARGENTINE APPROACH TO CANADIAN AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON.

1. MINISTER AT THE CANADIAN EMBASSY TELEPHONED THOMAS LAST NIGHT TO REPORT THAT THE ARGENTINE AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON HAD CALLED YESTERDAY ON GOTLIEB (CANADIAN AMBASSADOR HERE) ON INSTRUCTIONS. THE OSTENSIBLE PURPOSE WAS TO GIVE AN ACCOUNT OF THE DISCUSSIONS EARLIER IN THE WEEK BETWEEN COSTA MENDEZ AND HAIG. BUT THERE SEEMED TO BE MORE TO IT THAN THAT. THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT WANTED TO MAKE SURE THAT THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT SAW THEIR POSITION IN THE BEST LIGHT THEY COULD MANAGE, AND LEFT THE IMPRESSION THAT THEY LOOKED ON CANADA AS A POSSIBLE PARTICIPANT IN SOME EVENTUAL SOLUTION TO THE FALKLAND ISLANDS PROBLEM.

2. THE ARGENTINE AMBASSADOR APPARENTLY TOOK A STUDIEDLY MODERATE LINE, EMPHASIZING THAT HIS GOVERNMENT RECOGNISED THE POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE PRESENT SITUATION IN THE UK AND THAT EVERYTHING WAS NEGOTIABLE EXCEPT THE SOVEREIGNTY ITSELF. HE CLAIMED THAT COSTA MENDEZ HAD DISCUSSED WITH HAIG HOW TO QUOTE FINESSE UNQUOTE THE ARGENTINE FORMULA ON SOVEREIGNTY. THE MAIN POINT OF INTEREST WHICH SEEMED TO EMERGE WAS THAT ACCORDING TO THE ARGENTINE AMBASSADOR (FOR WHAT THAT MAY BE WORTH) ALTHOUGH THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT COULD NOT ADMIT THAT SOVEREIGNTY WAS NEGOTIABLE, IT NEED NOT BE IMMEDIATE QUOTE IN ITS CONCRETE EXERCISE UNQUOTE.

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3. HE EVIDENTLY WENT OVER A NUMBER OF IDEAS FOR INTERIM ADMINISTRATION IN THE ISLANDS (EG A HEMISPHERIC TEAM CONSISTING OF TWO HISPANICS, A CANADIAN, AND AN AMERICAN; OR A JOINT UK/ARGENTINE TEAM).

4. IN AMONG A GOOD DEAL OF FLANNEL, THE ARGENTINIAN ALSO APPEARS TO HAVE SAID THAT ONE THING HIS GOVERNMENT WAS THINKING OF WAS THAT WHILE DISCUSSIONS ABOUT POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS WERE TAKING PLACE, SOME KIND OF HOLDING ARRANGEMENT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE INVOLVING WITHDRAWAL OF ARGENTINE TROOPS WHILE THE BRITISH FLEET STOOD OFF THE ISLANDS.

5. GOTLIEB APPEARS TO HAVE GIVEN A FIRM ACCOUNT OF THE CANADIAN POSITION, MAKING IT CLEAR THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT BE PREPARED TO LOOK AT ANY IDEAS FOR MEDIATION UNTIL THE BRITISH WERE READY AND THAT THIS WOULD CERTAINLY NOT BE UNTIL THE ARGENTINE TROOPS HAD WITHDRAWN. GOTLIEB WAS ALSO REPORTED TO HAVE UNDERLINED HIS ABSOLUTE BELIEF IN THE BRITISH RESOLVE TO CARRY THE THING THROUGH.

HENDERSON

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