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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

26 November 1984

Dear Charles, *Yes* Prime Minister
Content for this
to happen?
CDP 26/xi

Visit by Argentine Church Leaders

The British Council of Churches (BCC) have told us that they have invited a delegation of about 10 from the Consultative Council of Churches in Argentina to the BCC Assembly in late November. The BCC have suggested that some of the Argentine delegation should call on officials here, preferably on 27 November.

Although there is no direct precedent, it would not be the first meeting of broadly the same kind since the events of 1982. Mr Onslow met a delegation of Argentine next-of-kin in April 1983. Private Argentine citizens, mainly businessmen, have called a number of times on officials in the FCO since the conflict. And British businessmen and parliamentary visitors to Argentina have been received in the same way. The Foreign Secretary has agreed that the meeting should take place, on the basis that it would not be inconsistent with our approach of seeking more normal relations with Argentina.

None of the earlier calls on officials have given rise to controversy. We would not expect the call by Argentine Churchmen to do so either. It would be a useful opportunity to discuss the situation in Argentina, eg on human rights including the fate of the three people with a British connection who were among the thousands of "disappeared" in Argentina. It would also enable us to emphasise to influential Argentines the realistic basis on which we are prepared to work for improved relations with Argentina, at the same time explaining our determination to stand by our commitments to the Falklands: and it is in these terms that the meeting would be presented in the Falklands.

For ever,
Peter Ricketts

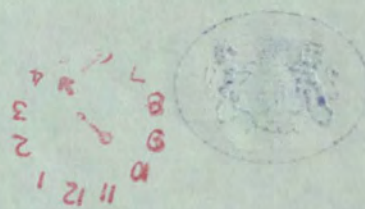
(P F Ricketts)
Private Secretary

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