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FM ROME 150810Z MAR 85

TO PRIORITY FCO

TELNO 275 OF 15 MAR 85

INFO PRIORITY WASHINGTON, BRASILIA, BERNE

MY TELNO 265 AND MIPT: ITALY/ARGENTINA ms

1. OSIO TOLD US TODAY THAT HE HE WAS IN NO DOUBT WHATSOEVER THAT THE ARGENTINE MILITARY HAD SABOTAGED PERTINI'S AIRCRAFT. HE SAID (SEE PARA 4 OF MY FIRST TUR) THAT IT HAD CLEARLY BEEN INTENDED THAT THE SABOTAGE SHOULD BE DISCOVERED: THE EXPERTS WERE AGREED, HOWEVER, THAT HAD IT NOT BEEN THE PLANE WOULD HAVE CRASHED SHORTLY AFTER TAKE-OFF. IT WAS A TERRIBLE BLOW TO ALFONSO, WHICH, COMING AS IT DID NOT LONG AFTER THE ATTEMPTED SABOTAGE OF SENORA PERON'S PLANE, CLEARLY CAST DOUBT UPON THE EXTENT OF HIS WRIT. OSIO TOOK IT FOR GRANTED THAT THE SABOTAGE HAD BEEN IN RETALIATION AGAINST PERTINI'S MEETING WITH THE DESPARECIDOS.
2. OSIO DID NOT BELIEVE THAT THE INCIDENT, OR INDEED PERTINI'S ABRUPT DEPARTURE, WOULD AFFECT ITALIAN/ARGENTINE RELATIONS. THE SUBSTANTIVE PART OF THE VISIT HAD ALREADY BEEN COMPLETED AND PERTINI'S LAST DAYS WOULD HAVE BEEN SPENT VISITING ITALIAN COMMUNITIES OUTSIDE BUENOS AIRES. IT WAS THE ITALIANS IN ARGENTINA WHO WERE MOST UPSET, PLUS OF COURSE THE BRAZILIANS. ALL THIS HAD CAST A CLOUD OVER WHAT HAD BEEN, AT THE START, A HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL STATE VISIT.
3. OSIO WAS DOUBTFUL ABOUT ALFONSO'S ABILITY TO SURVIVE. MUCH DEPENDED ON WHETHER THE AMERICANS WOULD BE WILLING TO BAIL HIM OUT THROUGH A RESCHEDULING OPERATION. THE AMERICANS, GERMANS AND JAPANESE WERE THE MAIN ACTORS: ITALY'S EXPOSURE WAS RELATIVELY SMALL. WE TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO EMPHASISE OUR OWN ROLE IN THE PARIS CLUB MEETINGS AND THE IMPORTANCE OF BUILDING ON THESE QUICKLY TO REMOVE ARGENTINE RESTRICTIONS UPON TRADE WITH BRITAIN.
4. FCO PLEASE REPEAT OUR TELNO 265 TO BERNE.

BRIDGES

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 MR JENKINS  
 MR D.C. THOMAS  
 CABINET OFFICE

COPIES SENT TO No. 10 DOWNING STREET
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**THIS TELEGRAM  
 WAS NOT  
 ADVANCED**

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