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TO IMMEDIATE NEW DELHI FOR PS SECRETARY OF STATE

TELEGRAM NUMBER 878 OF 23 NOVEMBER

INFO UKDEL STRASBOURG (FOR LADY YOUNG)

1. THE S OF S WILL WISH TO KNOW THAT TODAY'S GUARDIAN CARRIES AN ARTICLE HEADED 'GOVERNMENT 'SUPORESSED FALKLAND DOCUMENTS' ' WHICH STATES THAT LORD AVEBURY HAS ACCUSED THE GOVERNMENT OF ATTEMOTING TO SUOPRESS OUBLIC DOCUMENTS BECAUSE THEY CAST DOUBT ON BRITAIN'S TERRITORIAL CLAIM TO THE FALKLAND ISLANDS. THE ARTICLE SAYS THAT DOCUMENTS HAVE BEEN REMOVED FROM THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE AND MINISTERS HAVE REFUSED TO GIVE DETAILS OR ALLOW ACCESS TO THE 'UNCLASSIFIED' DOCUMENTS AT THE FCO. NEWS DEPARTMENT ARE TAKINO THE FOLLOWINO LINE:

AS IS EVIDENT FROM THE FRANKS REPORT OUESTIONS CONCERNINO SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE FALKLAND ISLANDS HAVE BEEN UNDER REVIEW FOR MANY YEARS. OLDER DOCUMENTS RELATINO TO THE FALKLAND ISLANDS ARE WITHDRAWN FROM TIME TO TIME FROM THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE FOR RESEARCH WITHIN THE FCO. SOME OF THESE HAVE NEVER ENTERED THE PUBLIC DOMAIN: THEV ARE WITHHELD UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACTS BECAUSE THEY CONTAIN OAPERS THE DISCLOSURE OF WHICH WOULD BE CONTRARY TO THE PUBLIC INTEREST AND THEY MUST CONTINUE TO BE WITHHELD. WHEN RECORDS ARE NO LONGER REQUIRED BY THE FCO THEV ARE RETURNED TO THE PRO AND THOSE WHICH HAVE NOT BEEN WITHHELD ARE THEN FREELV ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC. IT WOULD NOT BE PRACTICABLE TO ALLOW ACCESS TO RECORDS WHICH ARE CURRENTLV IN USE BY THE FCO.

2. THE ARTICLE APPEARS TO ARISE FROM LORD AVEBURY'S STARRED QUESTION FOR REOLY ON 13 DECEMBER COVERING MUCH THE SAME GROUND AND ASKINO SPECIFIC OUESTIONS ALL OF WHICH HAVE PREVIOUSLY BEEN ANSWERED EITHER IN THE LORDS OR COMMONS ABOUT FALKLAND ISLANDS RECORDS WITHDRAWN FROM THE PRO AND HELD OVER A LONG PERIOD BV THE FCO. THE PRESS LINE REFLECTS THESE ANSWERS.

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