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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

MT

29 November 1983

Dear John,

Argentina

We considered previously whether it would be appropriate to send a message to the new Argentine Government and came down, on balance, against the idea. We have now looked at the matter again in the light of the Radical victory and its extent; and of the reaction to it in the United States and Western Europe.

The Foreign Secretary believes that we are likely to have a number of difficult discussions with our friends over Argentina in the months to come. With the Americans, our main concern will be to ensure that certification (which should probably now be regarded as inevitable), does not lead to arms sales at a level or of a type to increase the threat to the Falklands or to do damage to our bilateral relations. With the Americans and with the Western Europeans, we shall go on having to argue the need for strict conditionality on loans to Argentina; and, a little more in the future, we shall have another round of the Falklands at the General Assembly. In all these cases, the points we make are likely to be discounted if our partners feel that we are unwilling to take some account of their view that Alfonsin offers the best hope for many years of effective and democratic government in Argentina, and should therefore be encouraged by the West.

The Foreign Secretary thinks that it would strengthen our hand if we were to make the political gesture of sending an appropriate message to the new Argentine Government. As the man who counts there is Alfonsin, the message would have to go to him from the Prime Minister. A draft of such a message is enclosed; and the Foreign Secretary would welcome an opportunity to discuss it with the Prime Minister when they meet tomorrow afternoon.

Yours ever,
J.P.F.

(B J P Fall)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street

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POSSIBLE MESSAGE FROM THE PRIME MINISTER TO THE INCOMING
PRESIDENT OF ARGENTINA

Your Excellency

On behalf of Her Majesty's Government, I am asking the Swiss State Secretary for Foreign Affairs to convey to you this message to congratulate you on your election as President of the Republic of Argentina and to express our welcome for the restoration of democracy in your country.

The action of the Argentine military Junta in 1982 tragically destroyed the fundamentals of the good relations which had existed between the United Kingdom and Argentina over more than a century. It is my sincere wish that we may now move towards the normalisation of the relations between our two countries including the re-establishment of diplomatic relations. I believe that the most realistic first step would be the full and reciprocal removal of all the commercial and financial restrictions imposed at the time of the conflict. I have expressed in public my willingness to enter into talks about this and my regret at your predecessors' failure to take up any of the proposals put to them.

I reiterate the satisfaction of Her Majesty's Government that the Argentine people can now live under a government of their own choosing, a right which should be enjoyed by all peoples,