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(FM BERNE 191100Z)

FM BIS BUENOS AIRES

TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELNO 958 OF 16 DECEMBER

ALFREDO SPILSINGER

1. ALBERTO MOLINARI, LAST YEAR'S CHAIRMAN OF THE BRITISH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, TOLD A MEETING OF THE CHAMBER'S COUNCIL ON 15 DECEMBER HE HAD BEEN ASKED ON THURSDAY, 8 DECEMBER BY A FRIEND HIGHLY-PLACED IN THE NEW MFA TO FIND OUT WETHER ANYONE KNEW THE ABOVE-NAMED AND IN PARTICULAR WHETHER HE HAD ANY CREDENTIALS FOR MAKING CONTACT WITH THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT ON BEHALF OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT AND WHETHER HE HAD BEEN IN NEW YORK LATE IN NOVEMBER.

2. RICHARD AHRENS, FORMERLY OF HARRODS (BA) SAID SPILSINGER WAS AN ACCOUNTANT, THE ARGENTINE CORRESPONDENT OF A LONDON-BASED AUDIT FIRM TAKEN OVER BY THORNTON BAKER, AND HAS REPRESENTED THEM AROUND THE WORLD. HE IS LINKED WITH CORK, JOLLIFFE, INTERNATIONAL, IS THE LOCAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ECONOMIST INTELLIGENCE UNIT AND WAS ONE OF THE FIRST TO BE CONVINCED ALFONSIN WOULD WIN THE ELECTION.

3. I SAID, AS FAR AS I KNEW, SPILSINGER HAD NO AUTHORITY FOR MAKING OFFICIAL CONTACTS.

JOY

POWELL-JONES

FALKLAND ISLANDS GENERAL
FCO
FID
CABINET OFFICE

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Mr. Butler

A. S. C. W.
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ARGENTINA; Relations

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From the Principal Private Secretary

20 December 1983

In the light of telegram No. 958 of 16 December from Buenos Aires I have contacted Sir Anthony Jolliffe to see if I could discover what further contact he had had with Senor Spilsinger since he last spoke to me on 11 November. The outcome is recorded in the attached note. There are clearly some dangers in this situation, but I think that my conversation will have helped to alert Sir Anthony Jolliffe to them. If you thought it right to pass any of this in confidence to H.M. Ambassador in Buenos Aires I would have no objection.

E. E. R. BUTLER

Brian Fall, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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NOTE FOR THE RECORD

I spoke to Sir Anthony Jolliffe on the telephone on 20 December. Recalling our last conversation on Friday 11 November, I asked him whether he could bring me up-to-date on any further contacts he had had with Senor Spilsinger.

Sir Anthony Jolliffe said that he had met Senor Spilsinger in New York at the end of November. Senor Spilsinger had said that he was about to be appointed by the Argentine Government to make secret approaches to the British Government and would give Sir Anthony Jolliffe a memorandum about this.

I commented that there were some dangers in the present situation. We had some evidence that Senor Spilsinger was not well known to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Buenos Aires but might be suggesting to them that he could make contact with them on behalf of the British Government. There was a danger of creating misunderstandings.

Sir Anthony Jolliffe said that he had made clear that he could do nothing unless he received a memorandum from Senor Spilsinger making quite clear that it came from the Argentine Government. Even then, he could do no more than act as a postman and transmit it to the British Government. He would take note of what I had said and would take no initiative in the matter unless and until Senor Spilsinger approached him.

I said that I thought this was wise. I asked him to let me know of any further contacts between himself and Senor Spilsinger on this matter and Sir Anthony Jolliffe agreed to do so.

FERB

20 December 1983

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From the Private Secretary

9 December 1983

ARGENTINA

Thank you for your letter of 8 December about the connection between Sir Anthony Jolliffe and Argentina.

There have been no developments since Robin Butler's letter of 3 November to Brian Fall. Robin told the then Lord Mayor that we were at his disposal if he wished to receive guidance on what he should say to Senor Spilsinger but Sir Anthony Jolliffe did not take up this offer.

I therefore suggest that you say to Mr. Joy that Sir Anthony Jolliffe does not have the Prime Minister's authority for contacts with Argentina. Moreover, as Robin Butler's letter made clear, Jolliffe had explained to Senor Spilsinger that he could not speak for the British Government or act as an intermediary.

Peter Ricketts, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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