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MIPT: FALKLANDS

1. IN THE COURSE OF MY CONVERSATION WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER THIS AFTERNOON ABOUT THE MEXICAN INITIATIVE ON THE FALKLANDS, I ASKED HIM HOW THE BRAZILIAN GOVERNMENT VIEWED THE BALANCE SHEET OF THE FALKLANDS CONFLICT.
2. GUERREIRO SAID THAT THINGS HAD NOT TURNED OUT AS BADLY IN ARGENTINA AS THEY HAD FEARED. THEY HAD BEEN APPREHENSIVE THAT THINGS WOULD SPIN OUT OF CONTROL AND THAT SOME LEFT-WING POPULIST OR NEO-PERONIST REGIME MIGHT TAKE OVER IN ARGENTINA, WITH HORRENDOUS CONSEQUENCES FOR EVERYBODY. THE PRESENT ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT SEEMED TO BE THE LEAST BAD SOLUTION THAT ONE COULD POSSIBLY HAVE HOPED FOR.
3. TURNING TO THE INTER-AMERICAN SYSTEM, GUERREIRO SAID THAT THE ARGENTINES HAD BEEN MISGUIDED IN PLACING TOO MUCH FAITH IN THE EFFICACY OF THE TIAR. THE TREATY MIGHT CONCEIVABLY OFFER SOME PROTECTION TO THE SMALL FRY IN CENTRAL AMERICA IF THEY GOT INTO COLLISION WITH THEIR NEIGHBOURS; BUT IT WAS UNREALISTIC TO SUPPOSE THAT IT COULD AFFORD ANY PROTECTION TO THE BIG BOYS LIKE BRAZIL AND ARGENTINA, WHO COULD NOT CONCEIVABLY COME UNDER THREAT OF AGGRESSION FROM THEIR NEIGHBOURS (SIC). THE FALKLANDS CONFLICT HAD NOT DAMAGED THE TIAR; IT HAD MERELY SHOWN UP ITS THREADBARE CHARACTER.
4. I THEN ASKED THE MINISTER WHETHER HE THOUGHT THAT RELATIONS BETWEEN BRAZIL AND BRITAIN HAD BEEN AFFECTED BY THE CONFLICT. HE SAID THAT THEY HAD NOT, IN ANY SUBSTANTIVE DEGREE. OF COURSE, THE BRAZILIAN GOVERNMENT HAD VIEWED THE MATTER FROM A DIFFERENT STANDPOINT TO THAT OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT; BUT THEY HAD BEEN AT PAINS TO KEEP COOL HEADS AND VIEW THE DISPUTE WITHOUT EMOTION. I SAID THAT, FOR MY PART, I SHARED THE MINISTER'S VIEW. FAR FROM BEING IMPAIRED, I THOUGHT THAT OUR RELATIONS HAD STOOD THE OCCASIONAL STRESSES AND STRAINS VERY WELL. FOR THE FUTURE, WE MUST ALL HOPE THAT THE UPWARD CURVE IN OUR BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP WHICH HAD MATERIALISED IN THE MONTHS PRECEEDING THE ARGENTINE INVASION OF 2 APRIL COULD BE RESUMED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. GUERREIRO SEEMED DISPOSED TO AGREE WITH THIS, THOUGH HE ADDED THE CAVEAT THAT WE WOULD DO WELL TO AVOID ANY OVER-DRAMATIC INITIATIVE IN THE COMING MONTHS (MY TELNO 289 REFERS).
5. OUR CONVERSATION THEN TURNED TO THE PROPOSED VISIT BY MR ONSLOW (SEE MIPT).

HARDING

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