IMR HURD S/MR ONSLOW D D US MR GIFFARD

MR GILLMORE

MR WRIGHT

MR ADAMS

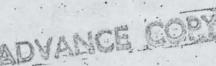
MR URE

HD/SAMD (FCO DIST + A/D F/I)

HD/DEF D HD/NEWS D HD/UND

HD/PLANNING STAFF

HD\HIGD



RESIDENT CLERK

PS No. 10 DOWNING

PS/CHANCELLOR SIR K COUZENS MR LITTLER H.M. TSY MR HAWTIN MR PERETZ MR ILETT MR MCINTYRE

Miss DICKSON (EIP DIV) D/EN

DIO CABINET OFFICE MR WADE-GERY CABINET OFFICE MR FULLER SAPU CABINET OFFICE SIR M PALLISER, CABINET OFFICE SIR RARMSTRONG, DIO. CAB. OFFICE

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FM WASHINGTON 221616Z APR 82

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 1401 OF 22 APRIL

INFO IMMEDIATE UKMIS NEW YORK MEXICO CITY SANTIAGO SAN JOSE PORT OF SPAIN TEGUCIGALPA BOGOTA SANTO DOMINGO LA PAZ MONTEVIDEO KINGSTON ASUNCION QUITO LIMA CARACAS PANAMA CITY BRIDGETOWN CASTRIES GEORGETOWN NASSAU BRASILIA PRIORITY BELMOPAN

FALKLANDS: OAS

1. THE FOLLOWING EDITORIAL ENTITLED QUOTE THE RIO PACT INDEED UNQUOTE WAS PUBLISHED TODAY IN THE NEW YORK TIMES:

ARGENTINA HAS INVOKED THE WRONG TREATY AT THE WRONG TIME TO PROMOTE THE ILLUSION THAT ALL LATIN AMERICAN NATIONS SUPPORT ITS SEIZURE OF THE FALKLANDS. THEY DON'T, AND SOME THAT DO SERVE ONLY THEIR OWN TERRITORIAL AMBITIONS. BY APPEALING TO THE RIO PACT AGAINST INTRUSION INTO THE HEMISPHERE, THE ARGENTINE GENERALS CHOOSE THE SEMBLANCE OF DIPLOMACY OVER THE REAL THING.

THEIR TURN TO THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES CAN ONLY PRODUCE A USELESS CONFRONTATION OF FOREIGN MINISTERS NEXT WEEK. THE UNITED STATES POINTEDLY ABSTAINED FROM APPROVING THE MEETING: THE JUNTA WOULD BE FOOLISH TO IGNORE THAT SIGNAL. ARGENTINA'S RESISTANCE TO COMPROMISE CAN ONLY INCREASE THE PRESSURES FOR THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION TO SIDE MORE OPENLY WITH BRITAIN.

THAT PARTISANSHIP WOULD NOT JUST BE AN EXPRESSION OF CULTURAL AFFINITY, AMERICANS NEITHER KNOW NOR CARE VERY MUCH ABOUT WHO HAS THE BETTER CLAIM TO THOSE LONG-DISPUTED ISLANDS, BUT THEY ARE WELL AWARE THAT 1,800 FALKLANDERS SHOULD NOT BE ABSORBED INTO A MILITARY DICTATORSHIP THROUGH A COUP DE MAIN THAT AFFRONTS ALL INTERNATIONAL NORMS.

IN FACT, THOSE NORMS ARE SPELLED OUT IN THE VERY FIRST ARTICLE OF THE TREATY ARGENTINA WOULD INVOKE AGAINST BRITAIN. THE RECIPROCAL ASSISTANCE (RIO) PACT OF 1947 OPENS WITH THE DECLARATION THAT 19 HEMISPHERE NATIONS QUOTE CONDEMN WAR AND UNDERTAKE IN THEIR INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS NOT TO RESORT TO THE THREAT OR USE OF FORCE IN ANY MANNER INCONSISTENT WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THE CHARTER OF THE UNITED NATIONS OR OF THIS TREATY. UNQUOTE

HAVING VIOLATED THAT COMMITMENT, ARGENTINA CHEEKILY ACCUSES BRITAIN OF AN EXTRACONTINENTAL ATTACK ON AN AMERICAN REPUBLIC, IN VIOLATION OF ARTICLE 6. THE IMPUDENCE IS COMPOUNDED BY CRUDE HINTS THAT BUENOS AIRES WILL RELY ON SOVIET AID TO SUSTAIN ITS AGGRESSION: FOR THE MAIN PURPOSE OF THE RIO PACT WAS TO SHIELD THE HEMISPHERE AGAINST SOVIET INTRUSION.

A VAGUE SENSE OF HEMISPHERE SOLIDARITY PREDICTABLY PRODUCED

18 VOTES FOR CONVENING A MINISTERS' CONFERENCE. ONLY COLOMBIA AND
TRINIDAD JOINED THE UNITED STATES IN ABSTAINING. BUT SUPPORT FOR
ARGENTINA IS TEPID, EXCEPT FOR SUCH NOTABLE EXCEPTIONS AS
VENEZUELA AND GUATEMALA - WHICH HAVE STANDING TERRITORIAL CLAIMS
IN GUYANA AND BELIZE CONCERNING FRONTIERS FIXED BY BRITAIN.

THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION IS RIGHT TO TRY TO SIDETRACK THIS PLOY AND TO KEEP THE BRITISH NAVY TREADING WATER WHILE NEW BRITISH PROPOSALS ARE CONSIDERED. THIS WAR IS BETTER THREATENED THAN FOUGHT, AND IF IT MUST BE FOUGHT, BETTER LATER THAN SOONER. IF THE THREAT OF IT HAS STILL NOT REGISTERED IN BUENOS AIRES, HOWEVER, ONE GOOD WAY TO GIVE DIPLOMACY A FURTHER CHANCE WILL BE FOR THE UNITED STATES TO REBUT THIS ARGENTINE CHALLENGE WITH A MORE PRONOUNCED TILT TOWARDS BRITAIN.

THIS DISPUTE DOES NOT REPRESENT A NEW COLONIAL THRUST BY A EUROPEAN POWER INTO THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE. NOR IS IT A SOVIET CHALLENGE EXCEPT AS ARGENTINA'S MANEUVERS FACILITATE MOSCOW'S MEDDLING. THE RIO NATIONS SHOULD STAND BY THEIR FIRST PRINCIPLE AND JOIN THE UNITED NATIONS IN CONDEMNING ARGENTINA'S RESORT TO FORCE.

HENDERSON