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FM WASHINGTON 242150Z MAY 82
 TO IMMEDIATE F C O
 TELEGRAM NUMBER 1879 OF 24 MAY.

FALKLANDS: PRESIDENT REAGAN'S VISIT TO LONDON

1. AN ARTICLE IN TODAY'S WASHINGTON POST ARGUES THAT THE FALKLANDS WAR WILL EXPOSE AS SYMBOLISM WITHOUT SUBSTANCE THE ECONOMIC AND NATO SUMMITS TO BE ATTENDED BY THE PRESIDENT AND GOES ON TO SUGGEST THAT, IF THE FALKLANDS BATTLE IS RAGING ON 7 JUNE, THE PRESIDENT MAY DECIDE NOT TO GO TO LONDON, OR AT LEAST TO REDUCE HIS SCHEDULE IN BRITAIN. AN UNNAMED WHITE HOUSE ADVISER IS QUOTED AS SAYING THAT EVEN THOUGH CERTAIN COMMITMENTS HAD BEEN MADE THE PRESIDENT'S PRESENCE IN LONDON COULD BE PRETTY UP-SETTING TO AMERICA'S LATIN AMERICAN FRIENDS.
2. DEEVER RANG ME TO SAY THAT THERE WAS NO TRUTH IN THE WASHINGTON POST STORY BUT HE SUGGESTED THAT WE MIGHT ALL CONCLUDE THAT, IF THERE WERE SERIOUS FIGHTING AT THE TIME OF THE PRESIDENT'S VISIT, SOME OF THE MORE GLITTERING ASPECTS OF THE PROGRAMME MIGHT HAVE TO BE TONED DOWN, BY WHICH HE MEANT THAT THE BANQUET MIGHT NOT BE TELEVISIED AND THAT THE PRESIDENT'S RIDE WITH THE QUEEN MIGHT HAVE TO BE CANCELLED.
3. IN RESPONSE TO PRESS ENQUIRIES, THE WHITE HOUSE SPOKESMAN HAS SAID THERE IS NOTHING TO THE WASHINGTON POST STORY AND THAT NO CONSIDERATION WAS BEING GIVEN TO ALTERING THE PRESIDENT'S SCHEDULE. THE SPOKESMAN ADDED THAT THE FALKLANDS CONFLICT WOULD BE AN ITEM OF CONCERN ON THE AGENDA. BUT THERE WOULD BE OTHER ISSUES AS WELL. THE PRESIDENT HAD AN EXTREMELY BUSY SCHEDULE DURING HIS EUROPEAN JOURNEY. HE WAS LOOKING TO THE NATO SUMMIT AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN THE EUROPEAN ALLIANCE. THE PRESIDENT'S EUROPEAN MEETINGS WOULD BE EVEN MORE BENEFICIAL THIS TIME AROUND BECAUSE OF THE CLOSE RELATIONSHIP DEVELOPING BETWEEN PRESIDENT REAGAN AND THE HEADS OF STATE

CONCERNED, INCLUDING THE PRIME MINISTER.

4. THE PRESIDENT HIMSELF HAS SINCE BEEN ASKED WHETHER HE WAS PLANNING TO CANCEL OR CURTAIL HIS VISIT. HE REPLIED: QUOTE WE HAVEN'T SEEN ANYTHING AS YET THAT WOULD SUGGEST THAT. OBVIOUSLY IF SOMETHING UNFORESEEN HAPPENED, WE WOULD HAVE TO CONSIDER WHETHER TO GO OR NOT. BUT NO, I SEE NO REASON. UNQUOTE

HENDERSON

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