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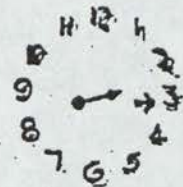
CONFIDENTIAL

FM MEXICO CITY 260005 Z MAY 82

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 432 OF 26 MAY

INFO IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON AND NEW YORK



MY TELS NOS 423 AND 424; MEXICO AND THE FALKLANDS

1. THE TILT TOWARDS ARGENTINA IN THE MEXICAN FOREIGN MINISTRY STATEMENT OF 21 MAY IS, I THINK, MORE APPARENT THAN REAL.

IF THE FOREIGN MINISTER HAD BEEN HERE, THE DRAFTING WOULD PROBABLY HAVE BEEN MORE BALANCED. CASTANEDA'S DISLIKE FOR THE ARGENTINE REGIME AND ALL IT STANDS FOR (WHICH IS SHARED BY PRESIDENT LOPEZ PORTILLO) UNDOUBTEDLY PLAYED AN IMPORTANT PART IN ESTABLISHING MEXICO'S MIDDLE POSITION.

2. THE STATEMENT WILL NEVERTHELESS HAVE GIVEN SOME ENCOURAGEMENT TO THE ARGENTINES AND THEIR SUPPORTERS IN LATIN AMERICA. IT HAS ALREADY HAD AN UNHELPFUL EFFECT ON PRESS AND TELEVISION IN MEXICO. THE PRESSURE FOR LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES TO AGREE ON SOME FORM OF ACTION AGAINST BRITAIN WHEN THE OAS RECONVENES ON 27 MAY WILL BE CONSIDERABLE. THE MEXICANS SAY THEY ARE OPPOSED TO SUCH ACTION, AND I EXPECT THEY ARE. THE PROBLEM IS HOW TO FORTIFY THEM TO STAND FIRM AND USE THEIR INFLUENCE TO STOP SOME OF THE SMALL LATIN AMERICAN MODERATES FROM FOLLOWING THE INTEMPERATE LEAD OF VENEZUELA AND PANAMA.



3. THE BEST WAY OF INFLUENCING TOP MEXICANS IS THROUGH PERSONAL APPROACHES TO THEM. EVER SINCE THE CANCUN MEETING PRESIDENT LOPEZ PORTILLO HAS BEEN A WARM ADMIRER OF THE PRIME MINISTER. HE ENJOYS HIS OCCASIONAL FORAYS INTO LIFE AT THE SUMMIT, AND THE ATTENTION WE HAVE PAID TO HIM DURING THE PRESENT CRISIS HAS CERTAINLY HELPED (BY CONTRAST THE ARGENTINES SEEM VIRTUALLY TO HAVE IGNORED HIM). HIS GOODWILL TOWARDS THE PRIME MINISTER IS AN ASSET ON WHICH IT MAY NOW BE RIGHT TO DRAW.

4. PRESIDENT LOPEZ PORTILLO'S LATEST OFFER OF HELP THROUGH THE MEXICAN AMBASSADOR IN LONDON (YOUR TELNO 424) WOULD PROVIDE THE OCCASION FOR A PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM THE PRIME MINISTER, PREFERABLY BEFORE THE OAS MEETING. IN THIS THE PRIME MINISTER MIGHT THANK HIM FOR HIS CONTINUED DESIRE TO HELP, DRAW ON SOME OF THE LANGUAGE IN HER RECENT MESSAGE TO THE POPE, REBUT ACCUSATIONS OF COLONIALISM, AND SET OUT ONCE MORE THE LEGAL GROUND OF OUR CURRENT ACTIONS AND HOPES FOR A FUTURE SETTLEMENT. THE MORE CONFIDENCE WE CAN SHOW IN HIM, AND THE MORE PRACTICAL ANY REQUESTS WE MAY MAKE OF HIM, THE MORE LIKELY HE IS TO USE HIS PERSONAL INFLUENCE IN LATIN AMERICA ON OUR BEHALF.

5. THE FACT THAT ALL THE EXCHANGES BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE PRESIDENT HAVE BEEN KEPT CONFIDENTIAL IS A STRONG POINT IN OUR FAVOUR. THE MEXICANS DISLIKE THE WAY IN WHICH THE ARGENTINES PLAY TO THE GALLERY.

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