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FM PARIS 091722Z JUN 82

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 610 OF 9 JUNE 1982

INFO PRIORITY WASHINGTON, BONN, UKMIS NEW YORK

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FALKLANDS: MITTERRAND'S STATEMENT

1. IN THE COURSE OF HIS PRESS CONFERENCE TODAY (9 JUNE) MITTERRAND WAS ASKED ABOUT THE EFFECT OF THE FALKLANDS CRISIS ON FRENCH RELATIONS WITH LATIN AMERICA. HE SAID THAT THOSE RELATIONS WERE CLEARLY LIABLE TO BE JEAPORDIZED BUT HE WOULD DO EVERYTHING IN HIS POWER TO PREVENT THAT.
2. HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT HE HAD NOT BEEN THE "MASTER" OF THE ARGENTINE DECISION TO START AN UNSTOPPABLE CHAIN OF EVENTS BY THEIR MILITARY AGGRESSION AND FLOUTING OF INTERNATIONAL LAW. FRANCE NATURALLY SUPPORTED BRITAIN, WHICH WAS AN ALLY. FRANCE AND THE UK HAD FOUGHT IN TWO WORLD WARS TOGETHER. FRANCE OWED A REAL DEBT OF GRATITUDE TO BRITAIN AND WAS A MEMBER OF THE SAME COMMUNITY. THE UK BELIEVED ITSELF TO BE WITHIN ITS RIGHT ALTHOUGH FRANCE HAD NEVER RECOGNISED ITS SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE FALKLANDS. THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE UNFORTUNATE CHAIN OF EVENTS WAS ARGENTINA'S.
3. MITTERRAND CONCLUDED BY SAYING THAT ALTHOUGH HE FELT SOLIDARITY WITH BRITAIN "THIS WAR MUST NOT TURN INTO A WAR OF REVENGE. THERE ARE LIMITS TO THIS CONFLICT WHICH I FULLY INTEND TO MAKE KNOWN AT THE RIGHT TIME, WHICH WILL NOT BE LONG".

FRETWELL

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