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FM FCO 171545Z JUN 82

TO IMMEDIATE BRUSSELS

TELEGRAM NUMBER 153 OF 17 JUNE

AND TO IMMEDIATE COPENHAGEN, DUBLIN, PARIS, BONN, ATHENS, ROME,  
LUXEMBOURG, THE HAGUE, OSLO, STOCKHOLM, WASHINGTON, BRASILIA,  
CARACAS, BOGOTA, LIMA, QUITO, SANTIAGO, MONTEVIDEO, MEXICO CITY,  
OTTAWA, CANBERRA, WELLINGTON

FOR INFO MADRID, UKMIS NEW YORK, UKMIS GENEVA, BERNE, UKDEL NATO  
FALKLANDS: CEASEFIRE AND PRISONERS

1. THERE REMAINS WIDESPREAD INTERNATIONAL CONFUSION ABOUT THE  
BASIC ISSUES INVOLVED IN OUR CURRENT PROBLEM OF REPATRIATING  
THE ARGENTINE POWS AND ACHIEVING AN END TO HOSTILITIES. THIS  
CONFUSION IS BEING WORSE CONFOUNDED BY DELIBERATE ARGENTINE  
MISREPRESENTATION OF OUR POSITION. MINISTERS ARE TAKING EVERY  
OPPORTUNITY TO SET THE RECORD STRAIGHT. MEANWHILE YOU SHOULD  
ENSURE THAT THE GOVERNMENT TO WHICH YOU ARE ACCREDITED IS LEFT  
IN NO POSSIBLE DOUBT ABOUT THE FOLLOWING BASIC TENETS OF OUR  
POSITION:

(I) WHAT WE ARE DEMANDING FROM ARGENTINA NOW IS A CEASEFIRE  
AND AN END TO HOSTILITIES: IE WE WANT PEACE. WE ARE NOT  
DEMANDING A 'PEACE SETTLEMENT', NOR THAT THEY SHOULD EXPLICITLY  
RENOUNCE THEIR SOVEREIGNTY CLAIMS OVER THE FALKLANDS, NOR  
THAT THEY SHOULD GIVE ANY LONG TERM UNDERTAKINGS.

(II) WE ARE NOT USING THE POWS AS HOSTAGES OR A BARGAINING  
COUNTER TO ACHIEVE THIS CEASEFIRE. ARTICLE 118 OF THE GENEVA  
CONVENTION DOES NOT ENVISAGE A RETURN OF POWS UNTIL A CESSATION  
OF HOSTILITIES HAS BEEN AGREED. PREMATURE RETURN RISKS  
PRISONERS BEING RECYCLED FOR WAR.

(III) DESPITE THIS, WE ARE PREPARED AS A HUMANITARIAN ACT,

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TO RETURN THE VAST BULK OF THE ARGENTINE POWS EVEN IN ADVANCE OF A CEASEFIRE PROVIDING ONLY THAT WE HAVE A GUARANTEE OF SAFE PASSAGE. REPORTS FROM PORT STANLEY (ALREADY AVAILABLE TO YOU) HAVE SHOWN THAT THE ARGENTINE PRISONERS WERE IN VERY BAD CONDITION WHEN CAPTURED AND THAT LOCAL RESOURCES ARE QUITE INADEQUATE TO PROVIDE SHELTER AND NOURISHMENT IN THE PREVAILING BLIZZARD CONDITIONS. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES WE WANT TO BEGIN TO EVACUATE THEM NOW, WITH NO STRINGS ATTACHED OTHER THAN A GUARANTEE OF SAFE PASSAGE, TO EASE A SITUATION WHICH COULD ASSUME DISASTER PROPORTIONS.

(IV) OUR EVACUATION PLANS ARE BEING DANGEROUSLY FRUSTRATED BY THE ARGENTINE REFUSAL EVEN TO GIVE THIS SAFE-CONDUCT FOR THE SHIPS ON WHICH WE WOULD PROPOSE TO RETURN THEIR PRISONERS. WE ARE PREPARED TO SEND THESE TO ANY PORT IN ARGENTINA OR A NEIGHBOURING COUNTRY WHERE THEY MAY BE SAFELY DELIVERED. BUT THE CLOSER THE PORT TO THE FALKLANDS THE FASTER WE CAN UNDERTAKE THE OPERATION AND THEREFORE THE MORE CHANCE WE HAVE OF AVOIDING EVER MORE SEVERE HARDSHIP AND EVEN FATALITIES AMONG THE POWS.

(V) THE ARGENTINE JUNTA'S INTRANSIGENCE DEMONSTRATES THEIR LACK OF REGARD FOR THE SAFETY AND WELL-BEING OF THEIR OWN TROOPS: THEY APPEAR TO BE USING POWS AS AN EXPENDABLE FACTOR IN THEIR OWN EFFORTS TO AVOID POLITICAL EMBARRASSMENT.

2. WASHINGTON, BRASILIA, SANTIAGO AND ANY OTHER POSTS WHERE ACTION WOULD BE EFFECTIVE, SHOULD (AGAIN) URGE THEIR HOST GOVERNMENTS TO TAKE UP WITH THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT URGENTLY THE QUESTION OF CEASEFIRE AND SAFE-CONDUCT FOR OUR POW EVACUATION SHIPS.

PYM