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ZZ UKMIS GENEVA

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FM FCO 181235Z JUNE 82

TO FLASH UKMIS GENEVA

TELEGRAM NUMBER 247 OF 18 JUNE

AND TO FLASH BERNE

INFO FLASH MODUK, CINC FLEET

INFO IMMEDIATE MONTEVIDEO

INFO IMMEDIATE BRASILIA

INFO IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON

INFO IMMEDIATE SANTIAGO

INFO PRIORITY UKMIS NEW YORK

YOUR TELNO 341: REPATRIATION OF POWS

1. PLEASE INFORM THE ICRC URGENTLY THAT WE ARE PREPARED TO ACCEPT THE ARGENTINE PROPOSALS AND CANBERRA AND THE NORLAND HAVE ORDERED TO SAIL TO PUERTO MADRYN, WE ARE PREPARED TO ALLOW THE TWO DESIGNATED HOSPITAL SHIPS, BAHIA PARAISO AND ALMIRANTE IRIZAR (BUT NOT THE CABO SAN ANTONIO) TO EMBARK ARGENTINE POWS. THE CAPTAINS OF THE TWO ARGENTINE SHIPS SHOULD CONTACT THE COMMANDER BRITISH TASK FORCE IN ORDER TO AGREE DETAILED ARRANGEMENTS FOR THEIR PASSAGE, TIMING, POINTS OF EMBARKATION ETC.

2. WE ARE ABLE TO AGREE TO THE CONDITIONS SET OUT IN YOUR PARA 4, BUT REQUIRE A CLEAR ASSURANCE FROM ARGENTINA THAT THE GUARANTEE OF A SAFE PASSAGE WILL APPLY ALSO TO THE RETURN JOURNEY FROM THE MAINLAND. (POINT 4 OF THE STIPULATIONS IN THE SPANISH TEXT IS AMBIGUOUS ON THIS POINT).

PLEASE ASK THE ICRC TO OBTAIN THIS AS RAPIDLY AS POSSIBLE GUARDS WILL CARRY PERSONAL WEAPONS, BUT OTHERWISE THE SHIPS WILL BE UNARMED.

3. WE ARE GLAD TO KNOW THAT THE ARGENTINES HAVE REQUESTED FULL ICRC PARTICIPATION.

PLEASE REPEAT TO THE ICRC OUR CONCERN ABOUT ADEQUATE

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SUPERVISION AND DOCUMENTATION OF THE REPATRIATION OPERATION (PARA 2 OF MY TELNO 245). YOU SHOULD ADD THAT THERE IS ALREADY EVIDENCE OF THE ARGENTINE MEDIA PUBLISHING GROSSLY INACCURATE STORIES ABOUT OUR TREATMENT OF POWS. IT WILL BE PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT THAT THE ICRC REPRESENTATIVES SHOULD BE IN A POSITION TO CONFIRM THE NUMBERS OF POWS REPATRIATED.

4. IN ORDER TO MINIMISE DELAY WE SUGGEST THAT CINC FLEET SHOULD SIGNAL DETAILS OF ETAS, ROUTES AND FINAL NUMBERS OF EMBARKED POWS DIRECT TO YOU FOR THE ICRC, REPEATING AS NECESSARY. WE UNDERSTAND THAT ABOUT 4,500 POWS ARE NOW EMBARKED ON CANBERRA.

5. FOR BERNE. PLEASE ASK THE SWISS TO COMMUNICATE THE POINTS IN PARAS 1 AND 2 TO THE ARGENTINE AUTHORITIES, SEEKING AN EARLY REACTION OF OUR REQUEST FOR SAFE PASSAGES.

PYM