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TO IMMEDIATE BERNE

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INFO PRIORITY BRASILIA, UKMIS NEW YORK, PORT STANLEY, WASHINGTON,
EC POSTS

RELATIONS WITH ARGENTINA

FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF SPEAKING NOTE

BEGINS:

1. THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT HAVE ASKED THE SWISS PROTECTING POWER TO CONVEY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF ARGENTINE THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT'S VIEW ON THE NEXT STEPS TOWARDS THE PROGRESSIVE NORMALISATION OF RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES.
2. THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT HAVE STUDIED WITH CARE THE MESSAGE FROM THE ARGENTINE FOREIGN MINISTER, RECEIVED THROUGH THE PROTECTING POWERS ON 17 FEBRUARY, CONTAINING THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT'S REPLY TO THE BRITISH PROPOSALS PUT TO THEM BY THE SWISS PROTECTING POWER ON 26 JANUARY.
3. THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT NOTE THAT THIS REPLY CHARACTERIZES THE BRITISH INITIATIVE OF 26 JANUARY AS A 'POSITIVE STEP'. THEY WELCOME THE ASSURANCE OF THE IMPORTANCE WHICH THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT ATTACH TO THE DEFINITIVE NORMALISATION OF RELATIONS BETWEEN THE ARGENTINE REPUBLIC AND THE UNITED KINGDOM, AND THE ARGENTINE FOREIGN MINISTER'S ACKNOWLEDGEMENT THAT THE SIX ITEMS PROPOSED BY BRITAIN FOR DISCUSSION IN OFFICIAL TALKS MERIT EXAMINATION IN DEPTH.
4. THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT NOTE THAT THE ARGENTINE FOREIGN MINISTER'S MESSAGE ALSO LOOKS FORWARD TO SUBSTANTIVE NEGOTIATIONS ABOUT SOVEREIGNTY. THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT HAVE MADE CLEAR THAT SOVEREIGNTY CAN NOT (NOT) BE DISCUSSED, BUT THAT ANY DISCUSSIONS

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ABOUT THE PROGRESSIVE NORMALISATION OF RELATIONS SHOULD BE WITHOUT PREJUDICE TO THE POSITIONS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM AND ARGENTINA RESPECTIVELY ON THE QUESTION OF SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE FALKLAND ISLAND, SOUTH GEORGIA AND SOUTH SANDWICH ISLANDS. THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT REMAIN READY FOR TALKS WITH ARGENTINE AIMED AT NORMALISING RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. THE AIM OF SUCH TALKS SHOULD BE TO ESTABLISH A RENEWED CLIMATE OF MUTUAL CONFIDENCE IN WHICH UK-ARGENTINE RELATIONS CAN BE DEVELOPED IN A PRACTICAL AND PRODUCTIVE WAY. THE QUESTION OF SOVEREIGNTY MUST, HOWEVER, BE EXCLUDED FROM THE TALKS.

5. DR CAPUTO'S MESSAGE PROPOSES THE ADDITION OF THREE OTHER SUBJECTS TO THE AGENDA. THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT'S VIEW IS THAT THESE ARE MATTERS WHICH FALL WITHIN THE UNITED KINGDOM'S RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE SECURITY OF THE FALKLAND ISLANDS AND THE WELL-BEING OF THEIR INHABITANTS. AS SUCH THEY DO NOT CONSIDER THEM TO BE SUBJECTS WHICH IT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE TO INCLUDE IN AN AGREED AGENDA FOR TALKS HAVING THE PURPOSE ALREADY DESCRIBED. THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT HOPE THAT THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT WILL ON REFLECTION AGREE THAT TO OPEN UP A DISCUSSION OF THE TWO COUNTRIES' MILITARY DISPOSITIONS IN THE REGION WOULD NOT BE HELPFUL TO TALKS WHICH, AS WAS INDICATED IN THE BRITISH PROPOSALS OF 26 JANUARY, SHOULD DEAL WITH MATTERS ON WHICH IT IS REALISTIC TO EXPECT EARLY PROGRESS.

6. THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT WOULD WELCOME AN EARLY MEETING BETWEEN BRITISH AND ARGENTINE OFFICIALS. THEY CONSIDER THAT TALKS ON THE BASIS SET OUT IN THE PRECEDING PARAGRAPHS SHOULD BE CONDUCTED DIRECTLY BETWEEN REPRESENTATIVES OF ARGENTINA AND THE UNITED KINGDOM UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE PROTECTING POWERS. IN THE BRITISH VIEW IT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE TO SEEK THE GOOD OFFICES OF THE PROTECTING POWERS TO CONVOKE THE INITIAL MEETING BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES.

7. WITH REGARD TO PUBLIC PRESENTATION, THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT INTEND TO CONFIRM, IN REPLY TO QUESTIONS, THAT THIS MESSAGE HAS BEEN CONVEYED TO THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT THROUGH THE SWISS PROTECTING POWER. BUT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT CONSIDER THAT IT WILL CONTINUE TO BE IN THE INTERESTS OF THE TWO PARTIES TO KEEP

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THE DETAILS OF THESE EXCHANGES CONFIDENTIAL. THEY HAVE NOTED
THAT THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT HAVE SO FAR SHARED THIS VIEW, AND
HOPE THEY WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO.
ENDS.

HOWE

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