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GRS 636
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FM FCO 151849Z MAY 84
TO IMMEDIATE BERNE
TELEGRAM NUMBER 86 OF 15 MAY 84
MIPT: RELATIONS WITH ARGENTINA
FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF SPEAKING NOTE
BEGINS:

A.S.C. ¹⁶/₅.

1. THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT HAVE ASKED THE SWISS PROTECTING POWER TO CONVEY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF ARGENTINA THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT'S VIEWS ON THE CONVENING OF TALKS AT OFFICIAL LEVEL BETWEEN REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED KINGDOM AND ARGENTINA AS PROPOSED BY THE SWISS AUTHORITIES.
2. THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT HAVE BEEN INFORMED BY THE SWISS PROTECTING POWER OF THE ARGENTINE RESPONSE TO THE MESSAGE GIVEN BY THE SWISS AMBASSADOR IN BUENOS AIRES TO THE ARGENTINE FOREIGN MINISTER ON 6 APRIL. THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT HAVE INFORMED THE SWISS AUTHORITIES THAT THEY ARE READY TO ACCEPT AN INVITATION FROM THE SWISS GOVERNMENT FOR REPRESENTATIVES OF ARGENTINA AND THE UNITED KINGDOM TO MEET IN BERNE FOR AN INFORMAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS WITHOUT A SET AGENDA. THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT CONSIDER THAT THE SWISS INITIATIVE IS A WELCOME AND POSITIVE GESTURE WHICH ACCORDS WITH THE OBJECTIVES SET OUT IN THE BRITISH PROPOSALS CONVEYED TO THE ARGENTINE AUTHORITIES ON 26 JANUARY.
3. THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT BELIEVE THAT THE AIM OF THE TALKS SHOULD BE THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF A CLIMATE OF MUTUAL CONFIDENCE AND NORMALISATION OF RELATIONS BETWEEN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND ARGENTINA. AT THE SAME TIME THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT ARE CONCERNED IN CASE MISUNDERSTANDINGS SHOULD ARISE IF THE INVITATION FROM THE SWISS AUTHORITIES CONTAINED AN INDICATION THAT THESE TALKS WOULD BE HELD WITHOUT PRECONDITIONS. THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT HAVE CONSISTENTLY MADE CLEAR THAT DISCUSSIONS ABOUT THE NORMALISATION OF RELATIONS SHOULD BE WITHOUT PREJUDICE TO THE POSITIONS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM AND ARGENTINA ON THE QUESTION OF SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE FALKLAND

ISLANDS AND THE FALKLAND ISLANDS DEPENDENCIES, BUT THAT THE QUESTION OF SOVEREIGNTY MUST BE EXCLUDED FROM THE TALKS.

4. THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT HAVE EMPHASISED THROUGHOUT THE NEED TO RECOGNISE THE REALITIES OF THE SITUATION AND THE REQUIREMENTS OF BOTH SIDES. IT WAS IN THIS SPIRIT THAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT ORIGINALLY PROPOSED FOR DISCUSSION A LIST OF SUBJECTS ON WHICH AGREEMENT MIGHT BE RELATIVELY EASY TO ACHIEVE AND FROM WHICH NEITHER PARTY COULD BE SAID TO DERIVE A ONE-SIDED ADVANTAGE. THESE SUBJECTS COVERED MATTERS OF HUMANITARIAN, AS WELL AS POLITICAL AND COMMERCIAL, INTEREST.

5. IN THE SAME SPIRIT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT REQUESTED THE SWISS AUTHORITIES TO CONVEY ORALLY TO THE ARGENTINE AUTHORITIES ON 6 APRIL PROPOSALS DESIGNED TO ENABLE BOTH SIDES TO STATE THEIR POSITION ON SOVEREIGNTY ENTIRELY SEPARATELY FROM THE DISCUSSIONS ON NORMALISATION. THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT REMAIN PREPARED TO ACCEPT THAT, IF THE ARGENTINE AUTHORITIES CONSIDER THIS NECESSARY, THERE SHOULD BE AN ORAL OR WRITTEN EXCHANGE OF STATEMENTS ON SOVEREIGNTY BEFORE BUT QUITE SEPARATE FROM THE TALKS. THIS PROPOSAL REPRESENTS A WORKABLE AND CONSTRUCTIVE RESPONSE TO CONCERNS EXPRESSED BY THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT, AND FULLY MEETS THE REQUIREMENTS OF BOTH SIDES. IT IS SPECIFICALLY DESIGNED TO ASSIST IN FULFILLING WHAT WE TAKE TO BE THE JOINT OBJECTIVE, THAT THE TALKS CAN TAKE PLACE WITH THE MINIMUM RISK OF BREAKDOWN. THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT HOPE THAT THE ARGENTINE AUTHORITIES WILL GIVE THE PROPOSAL VERY CAREFUL CONSIDERATION. THEY BELIEVE THAT IT IS IN THE INTERESTS OF BOTH SIDES THAT THE TALKS SHOULD TAKE PLACE ON A REALISTIC, CLEAR AND MUTUALLY AGREED BASIS.

6. THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT HAVE INDICATED ALSO TO THE SWISS AUTHORITIES THAT THEY AGREE THAT THE HOLDING OF A MEETING SHOULD BE ANNOUNCED ONLY ON THE FIRST DAY OF TALKS AND THAT SHORT PRESS RELEASES BE PUBLISHED SIMULTANEOUSLY IN BERNE, BUENOS AIRES AND LONDON. THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT INTEND TO TAKE NO INITIATIVE TO MAKE PUBLIC THE CONTENT OF THE PRESENT EXCHANGES WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF ARGENTINA OR OF THE TALKS TO BE CONVENED IN BERNE.

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