

GRS 460

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TO ROUTINE FCO

TELNO 533 OF 2 AUGUST

INFO ROUTINE WASHINGTON, UKMIS NEW YORK, MONTEVIDEO, SANTIAGO,
BRASILIA

WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES / FALKLANDS

1. I HAD A TALK ABOUT THE FALKLANDS LAST NIGHT WITH THE MOST REVEREND HABGOOD, THE ARCHBISHOP OF YORK, AT A RECEPTION FOR BRITISH DELEGATES TO THE WCC MEETING IN BUENOS AIRES. HE HAD CONTACTED ME EARLIER ON RECEIPT OF MY LETTER OFFERING TO BE OF HELP DURING THE VISIT OF THE BRITISH DELEGATION.

2. THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT IS OBVIOUSLY MAKING AN EFFORT TO ENLIST THE SUPPORT OF WCC DELEGATES FOR AN "OPEN AGENDA" APPROACH TO DISCUSSIONS ON THE FALKLANDS. THE BRITISH DELEGATES WERE TAKEN BY ARGENTINE COLLEAGUES TO SEE SABATO, VICE-MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, AND TO PARLIAMENT TO MEET A GROUP OF CONGRESSMEN AND SENATORS LED BY SENATOR GASS, CHAIRMAN OF THE SENATE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE. THEY ALSO VISITED THE INSTITUTO DE LAS MALVINAS WHICH WAS SET UP IN 1979. WHILE NON-GOVERNMENT IT IS COMPOSED LARGELY OF EX-MILITARY (THEY MET THE ADMIRAL WHO LED THE INVASION OF THE FALKLANDS IN 1982).

3. I HAD EARLIER OFFERED BRIEFING ON THE FALKLANDS IF THE DELEGATES WISHED. THE ARCHBISHOP SAID THAT THEY HAD BEEN FULLY BRIEFED IN BRITAIN AND REALISED THAT THEIR SUPPORT WOULD BE SOUGHT BY THE ARGENTINE PROTESTANT CHURCHES. THE INSTITUTO DE LAS MALVINAS HAD PROVED TO BE ONE-SIDED IN ITS APPROACH AND EVEN ADMITTED THAT AS FAR AS IT WAS CONCERNED THE WISHES OF THE FALKLANDERS WERE IRRELEVANT TO ARGENTINA'S RIGHT TO THE ISLANDS. THE POLITICIANS WERE LESS OBVIOUS BUT IMPRESSED THE CHURCHMEN WITH THE STRENGTH AND SINCERITY OF THEIR FEELINGS ON THIS SUBJECT AND THEIR FEARS OF THE MILITARISATION OF THE ISLANDS. THE DELEGATES QUESTIONED THEM CAREFULLY AND PRESSED THEM PARTICULARLY ON THE QUESTION OF WHETHER TALKS ON THE POLITICAL FUTURE OF THE ISLANDS COULD HAVE ONLY ONE RESULT - A TRANSFER OF SOVEREIGNTY. GASS AND OTHER POLITICIANS QUIBBLED ON THIS ALTHOUGH THE GENERAL INFERENCE WAS THAT THERE WAS NO CHANGE IN THE BASIC ARGENTINE POSITION. WHEN PRESSED ON THE IMPORTANCE OF A FALKLANDS SOLUTION TO THE PRESERVATION OF DEMOCRACY IN ARGENTINA, THE POLITICIANS DID NOT THINK IT ALL THAT IMPORTANT. THE DELEGATES FELT THAT IN THE ABSENCE OF OFFICIAL RELATIONS OTHER CONTACTS AND DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES HAD BEEN USEFUL.

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Prime Minister:

*The World Council
of Churches including
the Archbishop of ~~Canterbury~~
Talk*

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4. I WARNED THE MOST REVEREND HABGOOD THAT THE ARGENTINE MFA WOULD SEEK TO INVOLVE BOTH DELEGATIONS IN SUPPORT OF ITS POSITION UNDER THE AUSPICES IF THE WCC. I POINTED OUT THAT PRESIDENT ALFONSIN'S GOVERNMENT HAD NOT RESPONDED TO ANY OF OUR MOVES TO NORMALISE RELATIONS AND HAD MAINTAINED THE SAME POLICY AS ITS MILITARY PREDECESSORS. IF ANYTHING THERE WAS NOW EVIDENCE OF A HARDENING OF POLICY BY THE MFA AGAINST BRITISH FIRMS OPERATING HERE DESPITE OUR RECENT LIFTING OF RESTRICTIONS ON ARGENTINE EXPORTS. ARGENTINA, NOT BRITAIN, WAS BEING INTRANSIGENT.
5. TODAY'S PRESS REPORTS SUGGEST THAT THERE MAY BE A JOINT DECLARATION ON THE SUBJECT BY BOTH DELEGATIONS ENCOURAGING FUTURE TALKS.

SHARKEY
UNQUOTE

RICH

FALKLAND ISLANDS
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