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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

2 February 1987

Joan Charros

We need to know when the briefing has been given. [initials]

Falklands Fisheries: Argentine Proposals

I have told you

In your letter of 27 January, you mentioned the Prime Minister's wish to be assured that the Falkland Islanders had been made fully aware of the nature of our contacts with the Argentines. I enclose a copy of our telegram of 29 January to Port Stanley containing instructions for briefing Falkland Islands Councillors.

Joan Charros

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Private Secretary

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OO PTSTA
FM FCOLN TO PTSTA
291030Z JAN
GRS 533

SECRET
FM FCO
TO IMMEDIATE PORT STANLEY
TELNO 39
OF 291030Z JANUARY 87

ARGENTINE PROPOSALS

1. PLEASE SEE WASHINGTON TELNOS 3212 AND 3213 OF DECEMBER 1986 AND 38 AND 39 OF JANUARY 1987 AS WELL AS FCO TELNO 2241 TO WASHINGTON ALL NOW REPEATED TO YOU.
2. MY TELNOS 132 AND 133 TO WASHINGTON SET OUT OUR RESPONSE TO THIS ARGENTINE OVERTURE. AS YOU WILL SEE, IN PURSUIT OF OUR OBJECTIVE FOR THE INCIDENT FREE OPERATION OF THE FICZ WE ARE PREPARED TO EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITY OF REACHING AN UNDERSTANDING WITH THE ARGENTINES FOR COORDINATING FISHERIES MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS TO ENSURE THAT INCIDENTS DO NOT ARISE AND TO PROMOTE CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES. AN UNDERSTANDING WITH THE ARGENTINES ON FISHERIES WOULD BE A STEP IN THE NORMALISATION PROCESS WHICH COULD LEAD TO FURTHER PROGRESS.
3. EXPERIENCE SUGGESTS HOWEVER THAT PROGRESS WILL NEITHER BE EASY NOR RAPID AND THAT ONCE CONTACT WITH THE ARGENTINES IS MADE IT WILL NOT BE LONG BEFORE IT IS REFLECTED IN THE MEDIA. THERE HAS BEEN A GOOD DEAL OF SPECULATION ALREADY. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT LEADING OPINION IN THE ISLANDS IS PREPARED.
4. AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND GRATEFUL IF YOU WOULD PUT THE FOLLOWING POINTS TO COUNCILLORS INITIALLY IN STRICTEST CONFIDENCE.

- I) FOLLOWING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FICZ THE ARGENTINES, EVIDENTLY RESPONDING TO THE FOREIGN SECRETARY'S INVITATION OF 28 OCTOBER, HAVE PROPOSED TALKS ON FISHERIES AIMED AT REACHING AN UNDERSTANDING THAT WOULD AVOID INCIDENTS AND WOULD COORDINATE CONSERVATION ARRANGEMENTS.
- II) NOTWITHSTANDING HMG'S CONTINUING PREFERENCE FOR A MULTILATERAL ARRANGEMENT, MINISTERS HAVE DECIDED THAT THIS ARGENTINE APPROACH SHOULD BE FOLLOWED UP (OUR POSITION HAS ALWAYS BEEN THAT WE ARE PREPARED TO DISCUSS PRACTICALITIES WITH THEM). THE GROUND IS, ACCORDINGLY, BEING FURTHER EXPLORED AT OFFICIAL LEVEL VIA THE AMERICANS.
- III) THE SCOPE OF THESE EXPLORATORY MOVES IS LIMITED STRICTLY TO FISHERIES. THERE IS NO REPEAT NO QUESTION OF ANY DISCUSSION OF SOVEREIGNTY. NOR WOULD THE FICZ OR ARRANGEMENTS FOR RAISING REVENUE BE IN ANY WAY AFFECTED. THE OBJECTIVE WOULD BE THE COORDINATION OF FALKLAND ISLANDS AND ARGENTINE ARRANGEMENTS.
- IV) AN UNDERSTANDING ON FISHERIES WOULD NOT ONLY CONTRIBUTE TO THE SUCCESS OF THE FICZ BUT ALSO BE A STEP IN THE NORMALISATION PROCESS. IT WOULD, IN EFFECT, AMOUNT TO A DEPARTURE BY THE ARGENTINES FROM THEIR POLICY HITHERTO OF INSISTING THAT NOTHING COULD BE DISCUSSED WITHOUT A LINK TO SOVEREIGNTY.
- V) THERE WOULD, HOWEVER, BE LITTLE TO BE GAINED BY RUBBING IN THIS FACT IN PUBLIC. COUNCILLORS SHOULD THEREFORE WHEN THE STORY BREAKS EXERCISE THE ADMIRABLE MODERATION THEY DISPLAYED IN DECEMBER FOLLOWING THE BRIEFING BASED ON OUR TELNO 460 TO PORT STANLEY.

6. THE OBVIOUS OPPORTUNITY FOR BRIEFING COUNCILLORS WOULD BE THE EXCO SESSION ON 4 FEBRUARY BUT SUBJECT TO DEVELOPMENTS THERE COULD BE A NEED BEFORE THEN. YOU MAY THINK THAT IN SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES THERE WOULD BE ADVANTAGE, RATHER THAN SUMMONING ALL OF THE COUNCILLORS TO A SPECIAL MEETING, TO BRIEF THEM EITHER BY POST, OR PENDING EXCO, LIMIT BRIEFING TO STANLEY COUNCILLORS. THE STORY MUST NOT REPEAT NOT BREAK IN STANLEY.

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OCMIAN 3817

FALKLAND ISLANDS- ARGENTINE PROPOSALS

LIMITED

FID
NEWS D
SAMD

PS
PS/LADY YOUNG
PS/MR EGGAR
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