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MY TELNO 377: ARGENTINE FOREIGN MINISTER'S STATEMENT ON THE  
FALKLANDS

SUMMARY

1. ARGENTINE FOREIGN MINISTRY DENY THAT SOVEREIGNTY CAN BE  
EXCLUDED FROM DIALOGUE WITH BRITAIN.

DETAIL

2. THE FRONT PAGE LEAD STORY IN LA PRENSA OF 20 OCTOBER IS ENTITLED 'SOVEREIGNTY CANNOT BE EXCLUDED FROM THE DIALOGUE ON THE FALKLANDS'. THE ARGENTINE FOREIGN MINISTRY IS QUOTED AS OFFICIALLY DENYING THAT IT WOULD ACCEPT EXCLUSION OF THE SOVEREIGNTY ISSUE IN ANY HYPOTHETICAL RENEWAL OF DIALOGUE WITH BRITAIN BECAUSE THIS WOULD BE INADMISSABLE FOR THE ARGENTINE POSITION. THE MINISTRY IS ALSO QUOTED AS DENYING THAT THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT OR PRESIDENT ALFONSIN HAD ANY BRITISH PROPOSAL UNDER CONSIDERATION ON THE FALKLANDS ISSUE AS CLAIMED BY THE FOREIGN OFFICE AND AS STATING THAT THE ABSENCE OF PRE-CONDITIONS FOR A RENEWAL OF THE ANGLO-ARGENTINE DIALOGUE WAS A REPEATEDLY SUSTAINED POSITION OF THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT WHICH HAS BEEN SUPPORTED BY AN AMPLE MAJORITY OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY. ACCORDING TO LA PRENSA LOCAL DIPLOMATIC SOURCES TOOK THE VIEW THAT IN HIS INTERVIEW WITH ITN THE ARGENTINE FOREIGN MINISTER HAD BEEN REFERRING TO THE FORMULA FOR RENEWING DIALOGUE AFTER THE BERNE FAILURE WHICH WOULD COVER ALL FUTURE ASPECTS OF THE ISLANDS. THIS IMPLIED THAT SOVEREIGNTY WOULD NOT BE EXCLUDED.

3. LA NACION AND CLARIN CARRY SIMILAR STORIES, BUT ON INSIDE PAGES. NACION QUOTES LOCAL DIPLOMATIC SOURCES AS SAYING THAT THE ARGENTINE FORMULATION WAS NOTHING NEW AND THAT IT WAS BRITAIN WHICH INSISTED ON THE PRE-CONDITION THAT SOVEREIGNTY BE EXCLUDED. THESE SOURCES BELIEVED THAT THE RAY OF HOPE PERCEIVED BY CAPUTO MAY HAVE COME DURING HIS RECENT CONVERSATION WITH THE UK REPRESENTATIVE AT THE UNITED NATIONS.

COMMENT

4. THE LOCAL TIMES CORRESPONDENT HAS ASKED ME WHETHER CAPUTO'S STATEMENTS ARE INSPIRED BY ELECTORAL AMBITIONS (HE IS STANDING AS NATIONAL DEPUTY NEXT MAY). I HAVE DECLINED TO SPECULATE ABOUT WHAT MOTIVATES CAPUTO'S PERIODIC BLURTINGS TO THE PRESS. BUT I SUPPOSE IT IS JUST ON THE CARDS TAT HE BELIEVES THAT THIS SORT OF PUBLICITY WILL DO HIM SOME GOOD IN THE PUBLIC EYE. IT CERTAINLY KEEPS HIM THERE.

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