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ALFONSIN'S MESSAGE TO MRS THATCHER

SUMMARY

1. ALFONSIN SENDS CONDOLENCES OVER LOCKERBIE DISASTER. REFERENCE TO DIALOGUE. SPECULATION OVER A REPLY. CRITICISM OF FALKLANDS BROADCAST.

DETAIL

2. PRESIDENT RAUL ALFONSIN'S MESSAGE OF CONDOLENCES TO MRS THATCHER OVER THE LOCKERBIE DISASTER, WHICH WAS DELIVERED TO THE SWISS AMBASSADOR LATE ON 23 DECEMBER (TEXT SENT VIA BERNE), HAS RECEIVED SOME PRESS ATTENTION AS THE FIRST DIRECT COMMUNICATION BETWEEN AN ARGENTINE PRESIDENT AND THE PRIME MINISTER SINCE THE BREAK IN DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS.

3. THE 27 DECEMBER 'LA NACION' REPORTS THAT THE PRESIDENTIAL OFFICE RE-ISSUED THE MESSAGE ON 26 DECEMBER 'OWING TO THE IMPORTANCE WHICH THE PRESIDENT PLACES ON ONE OF THE PARAGRAPHS.' THE PARAGRAPH IN QUESTION READS, '(ARGENTINA'S) SOLIDARITY OVER THIS TRAGIC EVENT WOULD BECOME A STRONG AND EMPHATIC CONDEMNATION SHOULD THE SUSPECTED TERRORIST CAUSE OF THE DISASTER BE CONFIRMED, WHICH WOULD MAKE IT EVEN MORE DISTRESSING TO THOSE OF US WHO REJECT ALL FORMS OF VIOLENCE AND BELIEVE THAT DIALOGUE, CO-EXISTENCE AND PEACE ARE POSSIBLE.'

4. 'EL CRONISTA COMERCIAL' OF 26 DECEMBER QUOTES 'OFFICIAL SPOKESMEN' AS SAYING THAT THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT IS AWAITING 'WITH GREAT EXPECTATION AN EVENTUAL BRITISH RESPONSE' TO ALFONSIN'S MESSAGE. THE SAME ARTICLE QUOTES MRS THATCHER'S CHRISTMAS BROADCAST TO THE FALKLAND ISLANDS AND THE RESPONSE FROM THE FOREIGN MINISTRY'S SECRETARY FOR SPECIAL AFFAIRS, RAUL ALCONADA SEMPE, WHO CALLED THE BROADCAST 'A POLITICAL PLOY' INTENDED TO REDUCE 'THE DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL COST OF BEING BROUGHT TO JUDGEMENT ON THE ISSUE' AT UNGA.

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FALKLAND ISLANDS

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