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Mr Bright Esq.
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FOLLOWING FOR

:

C C BRIGHT ESQ, SAMD. FCO

COPY BY BAG TO

:

M W GROWCOTT ESQ, PORT STANLEY

FROM

:

R H T GOZNEY, BUENOS AIRES

MR RDILEY'S VISIT TO THE FALKLANDS: ARGENTINE PRESS COVERAGE

1. THE NEW YEAR HAS STARTED WITH THREE SIGNIFICANT PIECES OF PUBLIC COMMENT ABOUT THE SUGGESTIONS WHICH MR RIDLEY MADE TO THE FALKLAND ISLANDERS. AS THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE BRITISH RETURN TO THE FALKLANDS IN 1833 3 JANUARY PROMPTED, AS IN PREVIOUS YEARS, A STATEMENT FROM THE QUOTE INSTITUTE FOR THE MALVINAS AND SOUTHERN ARGENTINE LANDS UNQUOTE. THE SAME DAY QUOTE CLARIN UNQUOTE CARRIED A SIGNED ARTICLE AND ON 6 JANUARY THE NEWSPAPER QUOTE LA NACION UNQUOTE, WHICH OFTEN REFLECTS AN OFFICIAL LINE, RAN AN EDITORIAL.

2. THE INSTITUTE IS THE MOST IMPORTANT OF THE NON-GOVERNMENT BODIES THAT CAMPAIGN FOR QUOTE THE RETURN OF THE ISLANDS UNQUOTE. HEADED BY ADMIRAL FRAGA, CURRENTLY SOCIAL WELFARE MINISTER AND FORMERLY NATIONAL DIRECTOR FOR THE ANTARCTIC, IT IS RESPECTABLE ENOUGH FOR MEMBERS OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY SUCH AS OLIVERI LOPEZ AND BALCARCE TO BE ACTIVE MEMBERS. THE STATEMENT MAKES TWO MAJOR POINTS -

(A) ALTHOUGH THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT AGREED TO NEGOTIATE WITH ARGENTINA OVER THE FALKLANDS THEY HAVE NEVER DONE SO PROPERLY BUT INSTEAD HAVE TRIED TO POINT NEGOTIATIONS IN THE DIRECTION OF ECONOMIC AGREEMENTS IGNORING THE PRINCIPLE MOTIVE FOR NEGOTIATIONS WHICH IS SOVEREIGNTY.

(B) MR RIDLEY'S RECENT SUGGESTIONS TO THE ISLANDERS SEEMED TO BE DIRECTED AT CONFUSING NEGOTIATIONS, BY INTRODUCING ELEMENTS THAT DILUTED THE PRINCIPLE MOTIVE AND BY ADDING DILATORY TACTICS.

3. THE WRITER IN CLARIN SAID THAT LONDON WAS STILL PROPOSING SOLUTIONS WHICH REPRESENTED MAINTENANCE OF THE STATUS QUO. THE PROPOSAL TO CHANGE THE FLAG AND LEASE THE ISLANDS TO BRITAIN, AS IF THEY WERE A SHIP, WAS A JOKE IN THE VICTORIAN TRADITION. TRADITIONALLY ARGENTINA HAD NEVER ALLOWED THAT SOVEREIGNTY WAS NEGOTIABLE, LET ALONE THE EXTREME IDEA OF LEASING WHAT IN FACT AND IN LAW BELONGED TO HER. THE VISITS OF MR RIDLEY, AND THAT OF MR ROWLANDS BEFORE HIM, WERE ONLY TO CONSULT THE ISLANDERS. UNDER 2,000 STRONG THE ISLANDERS COULD NOT AND SHOULD NOT BE CONSULTED AS IF ONE WAS DEALING WITH THE PEOPLE OF ALSACE AND LORRAINE.

4. THE IMPORTANT POINTS MADE BY LA NACION'S EDITORIAL WERE -

(A) SUCCESSIVE BRITISH GOVERNMENTS DO NOT SEEM TO HAVE UNDERSTOOD THAT FOR ALL SECTORS IN ARGENTINA, CONCERN TO END THE BRITISH USURPATION OF THE ISLANDS IS UNSHAKEABLE.

(B) IN THE LAST FEW YEARS THE UK HAS SHOWN SOME APPARENT FLEXIBILITY BUT THIS MAY NOT BE REAL.

(C) MR RIDLEY'S SUGGESTION THAT ARGENTINE SOVEREIGNTY BE RECOGNISED DOES NOT AMOUNT TO SUCH - THE IDEA OF THE STATUS OF HONG KONG IS SIMPLY ABSURD AND EVIDENCE OF THE SURVIVAL OF A COLONIAL MENTALITY IN THE FOREIGN OFFICE.

5. THESE COMMENTARIES ALL REPRESENT A GROWING AND UNWELCOME PUBLIC PRESSURE ON THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, PRESSURE THAT WILL INCREASE FURTHER AS SOON AS THE FALKLAND ISLANDS COUNCILLORS' LEGCO MESSAGE TO MR RIDLEY IS PICKED UP BY THE LOCAL PRESS, AS WE CAN ASSUE IT WILL. CAVENDOLI WILL HAVE AN INCREASING PROBLEM OVER KEEPING THE GENII IN THE BOTTLE.

SIGNED: R H T GOZNEY

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SENT AT 07/1706Z JL/