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CWG094 06/0608 096C1058

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IMMEDIATE 060225Z APR 82

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SIC A3A/A2M/19F (SICS INSERTED BY DCC)
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DESKBY 060800Z
FM WASHINGTON 060225Z
TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELNO 1134 OF 5 APRIL 1982,
INFO IMMEDIATE UKMIS NEW YORK, UKDEL NATO.

FALKLAND ISLANDS

1. THE ARGENTINE FOREIGN MINISTER ADDRESSED A SPECIAL PROTOCOLARY SESSION OF THE OAS THIS AFTERNOON. AT THE INVITATION OF MCCOMBIE, BARBADAN DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL, CRABBIE ATTENDED AS AN UNOFFICAL BRITISH OBSERVER.

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2. COSTA MENDEZ INVOKADITION OF SOLIDARITY BETWEEN AMERICANS NATIONS, WHO HE CLAIMED HAD ALWAYS SUPPORTED ARGENTINA IN ITS 149 YEAR STRUGGLE AGAINST BRITISH OCCUPATION OF PART OF ITS NATIONAL TERRITORY. HE GAVE A HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF THE BRITISH PRESENCE IN THE FALKLAND ISLANDS AND EMPHASISED HOW ARGENTINA HAD SOUGHT SERIOUSLY TO NEGOTIATE A SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM FOR MANY YEARS, AS UN RESOLUTIONS HAD REPEATEDLY URGED THE UK AND ARGENTINA TO DO. THE UK HAD PURSUED THE POLICY OF DELAY INSPITE OF ARGENTINE, GOODWILL, INCLUDING ITS ATTEMPTS THROUGH THE COMMUNICATIONS AGREEMENT TO IMPROVE THE LIVING CONDITIONS OF THE ISLANDERS.

3. COSTA MENDEZ SAID THAT ARGENTINA HAD ALWAYS COUNTED ON SUPPORT FROM THE NATIONS OF THE AMERICAN CONTINENT BECAUSE OF THE JUSTICE OF ITS CAUSE. THE OAS IN PARTICULAR HAD EXPRESSED THIS SUPPORT IN INNUMERABLE WAYS. BRITISH ARGUMENTS THAT IT MUST HEED THE WISHES OF THE ISLANDERS WERE SPURIOUS. THE ISLANDERS WERE A TRANSIENT POPULATION WHO WERE EITHER OFFICIALS OR EMPLOYEES OF THE FALKLAND ISLANDS COMPANY, A COLONIAL ORGANISTAION. ARGENTINA HAD PROFERRED EVERY KIND OF GUARANTEE TO THE POPULATION AND WOULD ENSURE THAT

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THEIR RIGHTS WOULD BE DEFENDED. ARGENTINE FORCES WOULD PROTECT THOSE INSTITUTIONS AND PERSON WHO WOULD CO-EXIST WITH ARGENTINA.

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COSTA MENDEZ DESCRIBED THE GENESIS OF THE PRESENT CRISIS AND CLAIMED THAT THE BRITISH RESPONSE IN SENDING A !!HEAVILY ARMED WARSHIP!! TO REMOVE INNOCENT ARGENTINE CIVILIANS FROM SOUTH GEORGIA WAS DISPROPORTIONATELY PROVOCATIVE. ARGENTINA HAD A RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT ITS CITIZENS.

5. THERE WAS NOW A !!DEFACTO SITUATION!! ON THE ISLAND. ARGENTINA WAS PREPARED TO BEGIN ANY NEGOTIATIONS WHICH MIGHT BE INITIATED TO FIND AN APPROPRIATE SOLUTION ON THE BASIS OF ARGENTINA'S INALIENABLE RIGHT OF SOVEREIGNTY. HE CLAIMED THAT EVEN THOSE WHO HAD SUPPORTED THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION ON 3 APRIL HAD RECOGNISED ARGENTINA'S SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE ISLANDS. THE PRIMARY SOURCE OF THE PROBLEM WAS UK DETERMINATION TO ROB ARGENTINA OF ITS TERRITORIAL PATRIMONY.

6. COSTA MENDEZ SAID THAT ARGENTINA WOULD TAKE STEPS WITHIN THE INTER-AMERICAN SYSTEM, INCLUDING THE INTER-AMERICAN RECIPROCAL

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ASSISTANCE TREATY OF 1947 (THE RIO TREATY), WHICH COMMITTED AMERICAN STATES TO RENDER ASSISTANCE TO ANY OF ITS MEMBERS THREATENED BY EXTERNAL AGGRESSION. ARGENTINA WOULD STUDY WHETHER TO CONVOKE A SPECIAL SESSION OF THE OAS PERMANENT COUNCIL AFTER CONSULTATION WITH ITS FRIENDS. THE TIME MIGHT COME TO SEE IF THE DEFENCE MECHANISM CONTAINED IN THE RIO TREATY WAS REALLY USEFUL. ARGENTINA WAS CONVINCED OF ITS RIGHT TO THE ISLANDS AND WOULD DEFEND THAT RIGHT WITH PRUDENCE AND FIRMNESS.

7. COMMENT: COSTA MENDEZ STOPPED SHORT OF INVOKING THE RIO TREATY, ALTHOUGH HE OBVIOUSLY LEFT THAT POSSIBILITY OPEN. AN AMERICAN UN REPRESENTATIVE ACCREDITED TO THE OAS HAS TOLD US IN CONFIDENCE THAT A HEADCOUNT SHOWED A MAJORITY WITHIN THE OAS IN SUPPORT OF ARGENTINA'S POSITION. HE COMMENTED THAT ARGENTINA DOUBTLESS KNEW THIS AND SEEMED DETERMINED, HAVING SUFFERED A DEFEAT IN THE UN, TO PLACE THE ISSUE INTO A MORE FAVOURABLE CONTEXT.

8. COSTA MENDEZ WAS THE ONLY SPEAKER AT TODAY'S MEETING: THIS IS TRADITIONAL IN A PROTOCOLARY SESSION. IT WOULD BE OUT OF ORDER FOR A RESOLUTION TO BE INTRODUCED AT SUCH A SESSION. HOWEVER THE

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ARGENTINES COULD AT ANY TIME CONVENE A SPECIAL SESSION OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL UNDER THE TERMS OF THE RIO TREATY (TO WHICH MOST OF THE CARIBBEAN MEMBERS OF THE OAS ARE NOT SIGNATORIES). WE HAVE ASKED OUR CONTACTS AT THE SECRETARIAT AS WELL AS SOME LATIN AMERICAN DELEGATES TO THE OAS TO GIVE US WARNING SHOULD MOVES BE MADE TO CONVENE A SPECIAL SESSION.

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