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(FM BERNE 081550Z)

FM BRITISH INTERESTS SECTION SWISS EMBASSY GUATEMALA CITY

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELNO 58 OF 6 APRIL

AND TO IMMEDIATE BELMOPAN

INFO ROUTINE WASHINGTON MEXICO CITY SAN JOSE TEGUCIGALPA

MY TEL 57: FALKLAND ISLANDS

1. IN A TELEVISION INTERVIEW YESTERDAY (ALSO REPORTED IN TODAY'S PRESS) GENERAL RIOS MONTT STATED THAT THE JUNTA FULLY SUPPORTED ARGENTINA'S CLAIM TO THE FALKLAND ISLANDS. HE ADDED THAT GUATEMALA WAS PREPARED TO GO TO THE SUPPORT OF ARGENTINA IF THE RIO TREATY WAS INVOKED. SUBSEQUENTLY GENERAL MALDONADO SCHAAD (JUNTA MEMBER AND MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR) QUALIFIED THIS BY SAYING THAT GUATEMALA WOULD GIVE LEGAL AND MORAL SUPPORT.

2. SEVERAL GUATEMALAN POLITICAL LEADERS HAVE LINKED THE FALKLAND CRISIS TO THE GUATEMALAN CLAIM TO BELIZE. MARIO SANDOVAL ALARCON, LEADER OF THE RIGHT WING MLN (ONE OF WHOSE MAIN OBJECTIVES IS THE RECOVERY OF BELIZE) HAS OFFERED TO SEND VOLUNTEERS TO FIGHT ALONGSIDE THE ARGENTINE ARMY. ALEJANDRO MALDONADO AGUIRRE, LEADER OF THE PNR, HAS SAID THAT GUATEMALA SHOULD SEND TROOPS, IF REQUESTED.

3. WHEN ASKED TO COMMENT ON THE ALLEGED BRITISH REINFORCEMENTS TO THE GUATEMALA/BELIZE BORDER, GENERAL MALDONADO SAID THAT GUATEMALA ALREADY HAD SUFFICIENT TROOPS THERE TO PROTECT THE BORDER.

4. GUATEMALA WILL BE WATCHING EVENTS IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC VERY CLOSELY IN TERMS OF BELIZE AND AS THE BRITISH NAVAL TASK FORCE GETS CLOSER TO THE FALKLANDS TENSIONS MAY RISE HERE PARTICULARLY AMONG THE MORE MILITANT MLN SUPPORTERS.

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5. SO FAR THERE ARE NO VISIBLE SIGNS THAT GUATEMALA WILL ATTEMPT TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE CRISIS TO INVADE BELIZEAN TERRITORY OR OTHERWISE CAUSE BORDER INCIDENTS BUT IN VIEW OF THE LIKELY GUATEMALAN ATTITUDE I BELIEVE IT MAKES SENSE TO TAKE UP THE MFA'S OFFER OF ACCREDITATION (PARA 4 OF MY M AND TO IMMEDIATE TEL 56 NOT TO ALL) WITHOUT DELAY.

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