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INFO ROUTINE HAVANA AND WASHINGTON

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FALKLANDS: FRENCH PRESS

1. THE FRENCH PRESS TODAY (5 MAY) IS ALMOST UNANIMOUS IN EXPRESSING SHOCK AND DISMAY AT THE SINKING OF THE BELGRANO WITH THE CONSEQUENT LOSS OF LIFE. (NEWS OF THE SINKING OF HMS SHEFFIELD ARRIVED TOO LATE TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN MOST EDITORIALS). ALTHOUGH LE MATIN (SOCIALIST) SAYS IT IS HYPOCRITICAL TO WEEP OVER THE DEATHS OF THE ARGENTINIANS, NEARLY ALL PAPERS SAY THAT THE WAR HAS GONE TOO FAR, AND STRESS THE NEED FOR A QUICK CEASE-FIRE. FEAR IS EXPRESSED BY LEFT AND RIGHT-WING PAPERS ABOUT THE DANGERS OF INCREASED NORTH-SOUTH AND EAST-WEST POLARISATION CONSIDERED LIABLE TO ARISE FROM THE MILITARY ESCALATION. SOME PAPERS (NOT ONLY ON THE EXTREME LEFT) CRITICISE BRITAIN FOR HAVING BEEN HEAVY-HANDED. SEVERAL POINT TO THE AWKWARD POSITION IN WHICH THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT IS JUDGED TO HAVE BEEN PUT AND CALL ON THE GOVERNMENT TO PRESS FOR A CEASE-FIRE.

2. THIS AFTERNOON'S LE MONDE CARRIES A SOUR EDITORIAL WHICH SEES IN THE BRITISH LOSSES PROOF OF THE "FAILURE" OF MRS THATCHER'S STRATEGY OF "INTRANSIGENCE" AND BY IMPLICATION CRITICISES THIS STRATEGY AS EXERCISED IN THE EC CONTEXT.

3. IN AN INTERVIEW WITH LE MONDE RODRIQUEZ, THE VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE CUBAN COUNCIL OF STATE WHO IS CURRENTLY VISITING PARIS, IS QUOTED AS SAYING THAT CUBA'S SUPPORT FOR ARGENTINA WAS AIMED AT REINFORCING LATIN AMERICAN SOLIDARITY AGAINST THE US. CUBA'S SUPPORT WAS FOR THE ARGENTINE PEOPLE, NOT THE JUNTA. ASKED IF CUBA WAS READY TO GIVE MILITARY AID TO ARGENTINA RODRIQUEZ CONFIRMED THAT THAT WAS THE CASE. HOWEVER HE WAS QUOTED BY THE PRESS ON 3 MAY AS SAYING THAT CUBA WOULD HELP ARGENTINA "IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE COUNTRIES OF LATIN AMERICA": THOSE COUNTRIES WOULD DECIDE WHAT KIND OF ASSISTANCE WOULD BE GIVEN.

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