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TO IMMEDIATE F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 198 OF 15 APRIL

INFO IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON, UKMIS NEW YORK, UKDEL NATO.

MY TEL NO 191 : FALKLAND ISLANDS : SOVIET ATTITUDE.

1. THE CONTINUING TONE OF THE SOVIET PRESS COVERAGE OVER THE PAST 48 HOURS CAN BE SUMMED UP THE THE TITLE OF ONE ARTICLE: "ARGENTINA PROPOSES NEGOTIATIONS, BRITAIN RATTLES ITS SABRE".

2. THE PRINCIPLE THEMES HAVE BEEN:

(A) GROWING OPPOSITION IN BRITAIN TO HMG'S POLICY WHICH THE SOVIET PRESS CONTINUES TO CHARACTERISE AS FAVOURING A MILITARY SOLUTION. THE USE OF EXTERNAL TENSION TO DISTRACT ATTENTION FROM DOMESTIC CARES IS ATTRIBUTED TO BRITAIN AND NOT ARGENTINA.

(B) INCREASING US ASSISTANCE TO BRITAIN, BUT FOR SELF-INTERESTED PURPOSES. PRAVDA OF 15 APRIL RELAYS WESTERN MEDIA REPORTS OF US HELP TO BRITAIN CONSISTING OF THE POINTS LISTED IN PARA 2 OF WASHINGTON TEL NO 1270. HAIG'S EFFORTS ARE DESCRIBED AS HAVING MERELY BEEN A COVER FOR WASHINGTON'S SUPPORT OF BRITAIN'S GUNBOAT DIPLOMACY. THE ONLY COMPROMISE SOLUTION TO THE CRISIS DISCUSSED IN THE SOVIET PRESS IS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A US/BRITISH/ARGENTINE TRILATERAL ADMINISTRATION. THIS IS DESCRIBED AS CONTRARY TO LOGIC AS IT WOULD SIMPLY ADD A SECOND COLONIAL POWER TO THE FIRST ONE. IT IS PRESENTED AS EVIDENCE OF US INTEREST IN GAINING ADVANTAGES FOR ITSELF FROM THE CRISIS.

3. THERE ARE ALSO THE FOLLOWING SPECIFIC POINTS:

(A) PRAVDA OF 15 APRIL CONTAINS THE FIRST MENTION IN THE SOVIET PRESS THAT SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 502 INCLUDES A REFERENCE TO THE WITHDRAWAL OF ARGENTINE TROOPS.

(B) TWO PRESS PIECES HAVE MOCKED THE IDEA THAT THE SOVIET UNION WAS INVOLVED IN THE CRISIS. ONE OF THESE (PRAVDA, 14 APRIL), ALSO Poured SCORN ON JOURNALISTIC SUGGESTIONS THAT THE PRESENCE OF SOVIET SUBMARINES OFF THE ARGENTINE COAST WAS A DESTABILISING FACTOR. IT DID NOT ACTUALLY DENY THEIR PRESENCE.

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(C) THE SAME PIECE IN A SARCASTIC TREATMENT OF A TV INTERVIEW BY H M AMBASSADOR AT LIMA RIDICULED THE IDEA THAT BRITAIN WAS ACTING IN DEFENCE OF THE INTERESTS OF THE 1,300 INHABITANTS RATHER THAN TO RESTORE ITS PRESTIGE, TO PRESERVE ITS COLONIAL REMAINS, OR IN PURSUIT OF OIL. THIS WAS PICKED UP IN A 'SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA' ARTICLE ON 15 APRIL WHICH CRITICISED BRITAIN'S DESCRIPTION OF THE ISLANDERS AS 'HOSTAGES' BECAUSE THEY WERE FREE TO LEAVE, AND, SIGNIFICANTLY, HAD NOT DONE SO.

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