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SAVING TELEGRAM



FROM DUBLIN

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TO FCO TELNO 8 SAVING OF 15 APRIL 1982

MY TELNO 100: FALKLANDS: IRISH PRESS COMMENTS

1. The Irish media continue to emphasise that:

"The present problem is not the question of who owns the islands but the manner in which the Argentine leader tried to settle it." (Irish Independent: 14 April)

The Irish Times leader of 14 April said that the symbol of sovereignty appeared to be a sticking point, particularly for President Galtieri who:

"having seized the islands to stabilise his regime, can scarcely contemplate even half a step backward. But he may have to. For he it was who defied the unanimous call from the UN Security Council to refrain from the use of force, and it is he who remains in defiance of a Security Council demand that he withdraw his forces."

2. The importance of the UN framework is elaborated in the Irish Times leader of 14 April:

"... President Reagan and Britain's European friends must do their utmost to convince the British that Article 51 of the UN Charter does not, in fact, give the British Navy a perfect right to sink ships or storm the islands.

It does allow a country to defend itself until the Council acts. But last Thursday's call by the Council to both sides to refrain from force still stands, and the best hope of solution may yet lie in further UN action. Support for the UN and all it stands for should mean more to Britain than a quick victory over the Argentine Navy. It certainly does to the rest of us."

3. Reports of the Community solidarity in imposing economic sanctions link this to unsolved issues on the budget and farm prices. A number suggest that Irish officials have told or should remind their British counterparts that Irish farmers were losing £0.25 million

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per day as long as Britain held up the 1982 price-fixing agreement. An Irish Press report of 14 April from Brussels said that other EC governments would be looking for more flexibility from the UK when negotiations on both issues resumed. It also reports a senior British official as saying: "A moral bond has been forged which could well ease the negotiations".

4. Nationals and local papers play up Irish connections with Argentina, taking pride in William Brown (1777-1857) as the Co. Mayo born founder of the Argentine Navy. An Irish Times reporter visiting Argentina, Olivia O'Leary, has been sending back local colour reports of dismay amongst the Irish Argentine community at Ireland's support for Resolution 502 and EC sanctions. On 13 April she also quoted Manuel Anchorena, formerly Ambassador in London and leading member of the Peronist opposition, as attributing Ireland's position to her feeling "in no position to do anything positive about Britain's occupation of Northern Ireland".

5. There have been a number of references (especially in letters to the press) to Northern Ireland - and Rockall - as issues on which Ireland, like Argentina, disputes British claims to sovereignty. A Sunday Tribune report of 11 April headlined "United Kingdom stakes claim on Rockall" refers to a recent meteorological mission by a British research vessel, the Starella, as "further British assertion of its claim to the rock". An Irish language article in the Irish Press of 14 April on "The Gaelic-Argentine Connection" reports comments by Independent Deputy Neil Blaney linking the Falkland Islands dispute with the issues of "the six counties" and Rockall.

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