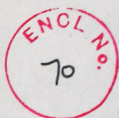


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(FM BERNE 061342Z)

FM BRITISH INTERESTS SECTION SWISS EMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO IMMEDIATE FCO  
TELNO 69 OF 5 MAY

FOR CONSULAR DEPARTMENT  
EVACUATION OF BRITISH COMMUNITY

1. FOR REASONS ALREADY KNOWN TO YOU WE DID NOT COMPLETE A REVISED CONTINGENCY PLAN BEFORE THE FALKLANDS CRISIS BROKE. FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE CRISIS BRITISH CITIZENS HAVE BEEN LEAVING ARGENTINA IN A STEADY FLOW AND PROBABLY IN FAIRLY LARGE NUMBERS. WE BELIEVE THOSE REMAINING DIVIDE ROUGHLY INTO THREE GROUPS: THOSE IN THE PROCESS OF LEAVING, THOSE STILL WAVERING, AND THOSE WHO HAVE DUG IN.

2. ALTHOUGH WE HAVE NO WAY OF ESTIMATING THE SIZE OF THE REMAINING COMMUNITY (ONLY 1,314 OF WHICH 572 ARGENTINE BORN HAVE RESPONDED TO OUR RE-REGISTRATION CALL SINCE 19 APRIL AND THE FLOW HAS DWINDLED TO A TRICKLE IN SPITE OF THE INCREASED HOSTILITIES OF THE LAST THREE DAYS) WE HAVE BEEN TRYING TO PREDICT THE CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH MIGHT PROVOKE A DEMAND FOR MASS EVACUATION, AND TO DECIDE WHAT OUR RESPONSE COULD SENSIBLY BE.

3. AT PRESENT A PERSON SPEAKING ENGLISH IN PUBLIC MAY PROVOKE SOME ADVERSE REACTION BUT, SO FAR, NON-VIOLENT. THERE HAVE BEEN INSTANCES OF ENGLISH-SPEAKING FAMILIES COLD-SHOULDERED BY THEIR NEIGHBOURS, SCHOOL CHILDREN TAUNTED FOR THEIR ENGLISHNESS: AND, MORE FRIGHTENING, ANONYMOUS THREATENING TELEPHONE CALLS TO CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS. THESE ARE SHAKING OUT THE NERVOUS AND ENCOURAGING THEM TO LEAVE. SOME DEMAND FOR EVACUATION COULD GROW IF WIDESPREAD VICTIMISATION OF BRITISH RESIDENTS ERUPTED AND SUCH AN EVENTUALITY SHOULD NOT BE RULED OUT IF LAW AND ORDER WERE TO BREAK DOWN. BUT WE SERIOUSLY DOUBT WHETHER WE SHALL NEED TO MOUNT A CLASSIC EVACUATION OPERATION FROM HERE BECAUSE THE VAST MAJORITY OF THE BRITISH CITIZENS NOW REMAINING APPEAR DETERMINED TO STAY. RATHER WE SEE OUR ROLE AS ONE OF PROVIDING FINANCIAL AND PASSPORT FACILITIES TO ENABLE OUR CITIZENS TO MAKE THEIR WAY TO URUGUAY BY COMMERCIAL AND PRIVATE TRANSPORT. WE SHOULD BE GRATEFUL FOR YOUR VIEWS ON THIS.

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/ JOY 5.5.

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UNQUOTE

NOTE FROM BERNE

IN THEIR NOTE FORWARDING THE ABOVE TELEGRAM THE SWISS FDFA INCLUDED THE FOLLOWING COMMENT FROM THEIR EMBASSY IN BUENOS AIRES.

BEGINS

THE SWISS EMBASSY HAS ALWAYS TAKEN THE VIEW THAT NOTHING SHOULD BE OVERDRAMATISED. THIS OPINION WAS ALSO MADE KNOWN TO OUR BRITISH COLLEAGUES, WHO HAVE UNDERSTOOD, SHARED IT TO A LARGE EXTENT AND TAKEN IT IN RELATION TO THE BRITISH PRESS. AT THE MOMENT ONE CANNOT SPEAK OF A WAVE OF HATRED OR ANTI-BRITISH FEELING AS HAS BEEN APPARENT IN ANALAGOUS CIRCUMSTANCES IN OTHER COUNTRIES TOWARDS THE PROTECTED POWER IN PARTICULAR AND THE WEST IN GENERAL. THERE ARE ALWAYS EXTREMISTS BUT IT IS TO BE HOPED THAT THE SITUATION WILL CONTINUE TO REMAIN UNDER CONTROL.

ENDS

LEE

FCO

CONS D

CABINET OFFICE

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