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Sir John Coles

Anglo-Argentine Relations: Lord Ridley

Lord Ridley telephoned Private Office on 22 January. He said that he had received a private telephone call on 21 January from the Argentine Foreign Minister, di Tella. Di Tella had been in Rome and had placed the call personally. Lord Ridley emphasised that no Argentine officials had been involved or, as far as he knew, aware of the call.

Lord Ridley said that di Tella had been trying to get in touch with him for several months. He had managed to dodge him until now. But last night di Tella had got through. Di Tella's message was that he wanted to involve Lord Ridley in how the Argentines might raise again the question of the future of the Falkland Islands. He wanted to meet Lord Ridley privately anywhere he wished to discuss this and seek his advice.

Lord Ridley said that he had told di Tella that he did not think this was the appropriate moment for such a discussion, indeed it would be counter-productive. Di Tella had said that the Argentine position had changed. They would now abide by any decision the Islanders took about their proposals. Lord Ridley had nevertheless said that he saw no point in a meeting with di Tella. Moreover, if the press found out, it could be disastrous. He had therefore refused di Tella's invitation. Di Tella had asked him to consider again overnight, which he had done. He had telephoned di Tella back this morning to confirm that he was not prepared to meet him. Di Tella had taken the news in a very civil manner.

I told Lord Ridley that I was sure it had been a wise decision not to see di Tella. But I would make sure that the Foreign Secretary knew about this contact. Lord Ridley stressed again that this had been a private contact from di Tella, and he would be grateful if this confidence could be respected.

*Stephen Smith.*

(J S Smith)

22 January 1993

cc : PS  
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