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DESKBY BUENOS AIRES AND PORT STANLEY 011100Z
FM UKMIS NEW YORK 281340Z FEB 82
TO IMMEDIATE F C O
TELEGRAM NUMBER 186 OF 28 FEBRUARY 1982
AND TO BUENOS AIRES, PORT STANLEY.
INFO IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON,
INFO BRASILIA, MONTEVIDEO, SANTIAGO.

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FALKLAND ISLANDS: ANGLO-ARGENTINE TALKS

*(attached)
at A*

1. THE ANGLO-ARGENTINE TALKS ON THE FALKLANDS DISPUTE TOOK PLACE IN NEW YORK ON 26 AND 27 FEBRUARY. DISCUSSION CENTRED THROUGHOUT ON THE ARGENTINE PROPOSAL FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PERMANENT NEGOTIATING COMMISSION WITH THE TASK OF ACHIEVING ACCELERATED PROGRESS TOWARDS A SOLUTION TO THE DISPUTE. TEXT OF JOINT COMMUNIQUE IN MIFT FOR ISSUE BY NEWS DEPARTMENT AT 1230Z ON 1 MARCH (AND SIMULTANEOUSLY IN PORT STANLEY AND BUENOS AIRES).

2. ALTHOUGH THE TONE OF THE MEETING WAS CORDIAL AND THE ARGENTINE POSITION IN NO WAY REFLECTED THE MINATORY TONE OF RECENT ARGENTINE PRESS COMMENT, IT WAS APPARENT FROM THE OUTSET THAT THEIR NEGOTIATING BRIEF WAS RIGIDLY CIRCUMSCRIBED. THEY MADE NO ELABORATION OF THE PROPOSAL ON FUTURE PROCEDURES SET OUT IN THEIR RECENT BOUT DE PAPIER AND THEY CLEARLY HAD NO MANDATE TO BE FLEXIBLE ON THE DETAILS (EG ON LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION, FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS AND THE TIME LIMIT OF ONE YEAR FOR A COMMISSION TO COMPLETE ITS TASK). THEY ALSO MADE CLEAR THEIR VIEW THAT THE SOLE PURPOSE OF A COMMISSION WAS TO RESOLVE THE DETAILS OF A TRANSFER OF SOVEREIGNTY TO ARGENTINA.

3. IN RESPONDING, MR LUCE EMPHASISED THAT WE HAVE NO DOUBTS ABOUT BRITISH SOVEREIGNTY, THAT FOR US THE WISHES OF THE ISLANDERS ARE PARAMOUNT AND THAT NO SOLUTION COULD EVER BE AGREED WHICH WAS NOT ACCEPTABLE TO THE ISLANDERS AND TO PARLIAMENT. NONETHELESS, WE WISHED TO MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO RESOLVE THE DISPUTE AND WERE THEREFORE READY TO LOOK POSITIVELY AT THE ARGENTINE PROPOSAL, ON THE CLEAR UNDERSTANDING THAT ITS WORK WOULD BE WITHOUT PREJUDICE TO OUR POSITION ON SOVEREIGNTY AND THAT ALL ASPECTS OF THE DISPUTE SHOULD BE INCLUDED FOR CONSIDERATION.

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4. THE TWO SIDES AGREED AN INFORMAL WORKING PAPER SETTING OUT A MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF A NEGOTIATING COMMISSION. TEXT IN MY SECOND IFT. THE MAIN STICKING POINTS RELATED TO:

(attached
at B)

- (A) THE DIFFICULTIES FOR THE ARGENTINES IN EXPLICITLY ACCEPTING THAT NEGOTIATIONS SHOULD COVER ALL POSSIBLE APPROACHES TO A SOVEREIGNTY SOLUTION RATHER THAN A NARROW CONCENTRATION ON MODALITIES OF A TRANSFER OF SOVEREIGNTY TO THEM. THE WORDING OF PARA 3 OF THE WORKING PAPER WAS EVENTUALLY AGREED, THOUGH WITH OBVIOUS MISGIVINGS ON THE ARGENTINE SIDE:
- (B) SR ROS WAS CLEARLY UNDER FIRM INSTRUCTIONS FROM HIS GOVERNMENT TO SECURE AGREEMENT TO A STACCATO WORK RATE FOR A NEGOTIATING COMMISSION (IE ACCEPTANCE OF THE PRINCIPLE OF MONTHLY MEETINGS). MR LUCE MADE CLEAR THAT THIS WAS IMPRACTICABLE AND THAT WE WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO AGREE TO IT. THIS LED TO A LENGTHY AND STERILE EXCHANGE. IT WAS FINALLY AGREED THAT THIS POINT SHOULD BE EXCLUDED FROM THE WORKING PAPER BUT THAT MR LUCE SHOULD INFORM HIS COLLEAGUES OF THE ARGENTINE PREOCCUPATION WITH THE NEED TO GIVE A VISIBLE URGENCY TO A COMMISSION'S WORK AND THAT OUR VIEWS ON THIS POINT SHOULD BE GIVEN IN OUR EVENTUAL RESPONSE ON THE MAIN PROPOSAL.

THE ARGENTINES ACCEPTED WITHOUT DIFFICULTY THAT THE PROPOSAL WAS AD REFERENDUM TO BRITISH MINISTERS (AND TO ISLAND COUNCILLORS) BUT LAID EMPHASIS ON THEIR WISH TO RECEIVE AN EARLY DEFINITIVE RESPONSE. MR LUCE UNDERTOOK TO RECOMMEND THE PROPOSAL POSITIVELY TO HIS COLLEAGUES.

5. THE TWO ISLAND COUNCILLORS, BLAKE AND CHEEK, TOOK A CONSTRUCTIVE POSITION THROUGHOUT. THEY APPEARED FULLY TO APPRECIATE THE IMPORTANCE OF ENSURING A CONTINUATION OF A NEGOTIATING DIALOGUE (IN ORDER TO PREVENT THE DAMAGING CONSEQUENCES OF A BREAKDOWN) AND TO ACCEPT THAT CONSIDERATION OF SOVEREIGNTY WOULD BE AN INESCAPABLE COMPONENT OF A NEGOTIATING COMMISSION'S WORK. ALTHOUGH THEY DID NOT UNDERESTIMATE THE DIFFICULTIES OF PERSUADING ISLANDER OPINION TO SWALLOW THE PILL OF AN ACCELERATED DIALOGUE, THEY HAVE SAID THAT THEY WILL BE RECOMMENDING ACCEPTANCE TO THEIR FELLOW COUNCILLORS AT THEIR MEETING ON 3 MARCH.

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6. DURING THE TALKS, MR LUCE STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CREATION OF A CLIMATE OF GREATER TRUST, PARTICULARLY BETWEEN ARGENTINE AND THE ISLANDERS, IF WE WERE TO BE ABLE TO MAKE PROGRESS. HE REFERRED SPECIFICALLY TO THE ILLEGAL ARGENTINE PRESENCE ON SOUTHERN THULE, TO UNAUTHORISED OVERFLIGHTS, TO THE MAGALLANESE ESTE TENDER AND THE RECENT BELLICOSE ARGENTINE PRESS COMMENT AS FACTORS WHICH CREATED RESENTMENT AND SUSPICION IN BOTH THE ISLANDS AND THE UK.

7. OVERALL, THE TALKS WENT BETTER THAN EXPECTED AND THE WAY HAS BEEN KEPT OPEN FOR A CONTINUATION OF A DIALOGUE. BUT EVEN IF WE ARE TO ACCEPT THE ARGENTINE PROPOSAL, WE HAVE TO RECOGNISE THAT OUR ROOM FOR MANOEUVRE WILL BE VERY LIMITED. THE ARGENTINES WILL BE LOOKING FOR SUBSTANTIVE AND RAPID PROGRESS ON THEIR TERMS AND WE WILL HAVE OBVIOUS DIFFICULTIES IN MEETING THEM ON THIS.

8. PRIVATE SECRETARY MAY WISH TO REPEAT THIS TELEGRAM AND THE IFTS TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE.

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MIPT; FALKLAND ISLANDS; ANGLO-ARGENTINE TALKS

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF JOINT COMMUNIQUE EMBARGOED UNTIL 1230Z ON 1 MARCH;

THE BRITISH AND ARGENTINE GOVERNMENTS HELD A MEETING AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL IN NEW YORK ON 26 AND 27 FEBRUARY 1982 TO DISCUSS THE FALKLAND ISLANDS QUESTION WITHIN THE NEGOTIATING FRAMEWORK REFERRED TO IN THE RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

THE BRITISH AND ARGENTINE DELEGATIONS WERE LED RESPECTIVELY BY MR. RICHARD LUCE MP, MINISTER OF STATE AT THE FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE IN LONDON, AND AMBASSADOR ENRIQUE ROS, UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE AT THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND WORSHIP IN BUENOS AIRES.

THE MEETING TOOK PLACE IN A CORDIAL AND POSITIVE SPIRIT. THE TWO SIDES REAFFIRMED THEIR RESOLVE TO FIND A SOLUTION TO THE SOVEREIGNTY DISPUTE AND CONSIDERED IN DETAIL AN ARGENTINE PROPOSAL FOR PROCEDURES TO MAKE BETTER PROGRESS IN THIS SENSE. THEY AGREED TO INFORM THEIR GOVERNMENTS ACCORDINGLY.

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