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 PS/MR KENTON
 PS/MR RIFKIND
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 MR J FREELAND
 SIR W HARDING
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~~SIR P MCKELL~~
 MR D C THOMAS
 MR WESTON
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 ED/NEWS DEPT
 ED/EED
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 MR J NICHOLLS, AUSD STAFF, MOD
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PS/CHANCELLOR)
 MISS M E CUND) TREASURY
 MR LITTLER)

SIR R ARMSTRONG)
 MR J S COBBAM) CABINET
 DIO (Cambridge)) OFFICE

MR POWER, SAD, ODA
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(FM BERNE 121315Z)
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 TO IMMEDIATE FCO
 TELNO 737 OF 9 NOVEMBER 1984

ADVANCE COPY

VISIT OF MR GEORGE ROBERTSON MP AND MRS SHIRLEY WILLIAMS

1. MR ROBERTSON AND MRS WILLIAMS' BUSY PROGRAMME BETWEEN 7 AND 8 NOVEMBER INCLUDED MEETINGS WITH MEMBERS OF THE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEES OF BOTH CONGRESSIONAL CHAMBERS, GOVERNMENT ECONOMIC ADVISERS AND, IN A LARGER GATHERING, WITH MFA ADVISER ARTURO O'CONNELL. THE VISITORS NOTED CERTAIN RECURRING THEMES:
 - A. THE INSISTENCE THAT FALKLANDS SOVERIGNTY IN SOME GUISE MUST BE INCLUDED IN FUTURE BILATERAL TALKS, EVEN IF IT WERE NOT FIRST ITEM ON THE AGENDA.
 - B. A CONSISTENT RELUCTANCE TO CONSIDER PROPERLY THE NEED FOR CONSULTATION WITH THE ISLANDERS ABOUT THEIR FUTURE. MRS WILLIAMS AND MR ROBERTSON SUPPORT THE PRINCIPLE OF BREAKING THE LOG-JAM AND APPEAR TO HAVE EXPLORED WAYS IN WHICH THE SOVEREIGNTY QUESTION COULD BE HANDLED TO THE SATISFACTION OF BOTH SIDES, BUT THEY MADE CLEAR TO THEIR INTERLOCUTORS THAT NO UK GOVERNMENT COULD OR WOULD RIDE ROUGH-SHOD OVER THE ISLANDERS.
 - C. A FAILURE TO GRASP THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WAR AND ITS LONG TERM CONSEQUENCES. THIS WAS PARTICULARLY EVIDENT IN THE PARALLELS DRAWN BY THE ARGENTINES BETWEEN THE HONG KONG AND FALKLANDS WHICH OMITTED TO ACCOUNT FOR THE FACT OF AN INVASION IN THE SECOND CASE.
 - D. A CONTINUING STERILE INTEREST IN THE BELGRANO CONTROVERSY WHICH WAS NOW PRIMARILY A DOMESTIC BRITISH POLITICAL ISSUED AND UNLIKELY TO CONTRIBUTE TO A SOLUTION OF THE FALKLANDS PROBLEM.

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E. TOO MUCH EMPHASIS ON THE STATEMENTS BY MR GEORGES FOULKES IN JUNE WHICH HAD PERHAPS BEEN OVERGENEROUS TO THE ARGENTINE POSITION.

3. THE EXCHANGES WERE GENERALLY CONDUCTED IN A VERY CORDIAL ATMOSPHERE, AND OFFICIAL MFA INTEREST WAS ATTESTED BY THE PRESENCE AT A MEETING ORGANISED BY DR MUSICH, OF NOT ONLY ARTURO O'CONNELL BUT ALSO OF FEDERICO MIRRE AND ON OF MY COLLEAGUES FROM THE MINISTRY, WHO REMAINED PASSIVE OBSERVERS AND WHOSE ATTENDANCE DOES NOT SEEM TO HAVE BEEN FORMALLY REVEALED TO EITHER MRS WILLIAMS OR MR. ROBERTSON.

4. THE VISIT PASSED OFF SMOOTHLY AND MAY HAVE BEEN USEFUL IN CLARIFYING SOME PERSISTENT ARGENTINE MISCONCEPTIONS. IT HAS HOWEVER SO FAR RECEIVED NO LOCAL PRESS COVERAGE, DESPITE THE FACT THAT GUILLERMO MAKIN EARLIER RECORDED SEPARATE, STILL UNPUBLISHED, INTERVIEWS WITH THE BRITISH POLITICIANS FOR "CLARIN". I UNDERSTAND THAT MRS WILLIAMS AND MR ROBERTSON WILL DISCUSS WITH FID UPON THEIR RETURN TO THE UK. FURTHER DETAILS OF OUR CONVERSATIONS HERE FOLLOW BY BAG.

JACKSON-HOULSTON
UNQUOTE

POWELL-JONES

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