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SIR R ARMSTRONG)
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(FM BERNE 141300Z)

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TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELNO 844 OF 13 DECEMBER 1984

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INFO PRIORITY MOD (SIC A3A), CBFFI BANK OF ENGLAND ASUNCION BRASILIA
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PRESS SUMMARY

1. SUMMARY

TODAY'S MAIN ITEM CONTINUES TO BE THE ASTIZ AFFAIR WITH THE REPORT BY THE HOUSE OF COMMONS FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE ON THE FALKLANDS RECEIVING LENGTHY AND PROMINENT COVERAGE IN ALL LEADING PAPERS EXCEPT CLARIN.

2. HUMAN RIGHTS

PRESIDENT ALFONSIN YESTERDAY TOLD A DELEGATION FROM THE ARGENTINE PERMANENT ASSEMBLY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS (APDH) THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT BOW TO PRESSURE OVER THE DETENTION OF NAVY LT ALFREDO ASTIZ. THE COURTS WOULD CONTINUE TO INVESTIAGE THE DISAPPEARANCE OF SWEDISH YOUTH DAGMAR HAGELIN WITH WHICH ASTIZ IS CHARGED. LA NACION CLAIMS THAT ALFONSIN MET WITH DEFENCE MINISTER BORRAS YESTERDAY TO DISCUSS WAYS OF AVOIDING AN 'INSTITUTIONAL CRISIS' THAT COULD BE PROVOKED BY ASTIZ' ARREST. ONE OF THESE MEASURES MAY BE TO TRANSFER ASTIZ FROM THE BUENOS AIRES NAVAL BASE WHERE IS IS NOW BEING HELD TO A UNIT IN THE INTERIOR OF THE COUNTRY, AS WAS ALLEGEDLY REQUESTED BY THE COUNCIL OF ADMIRALS, ON SECURITY GROUNDS. THE PAPER SUGGESTS THAT THIS REQUEST WAS MADE IN ORDER TO PACIFY JUNIOR OFFICERS WHO CONSIDER THAT ASTIZ HAS NOT BEEN ADEQUATELY DEFENDED BY THE NAVY. (HERALD P1, CLARIN P2, NACION P7).

IN THEIR MEETING WITH ALFONSIN THE APDH EXPRESSED THEIR CONCERN OVER TERRORIST ACTIVITY IN RECENT MONTHS AND OVER THE SLOWNESS WITH WHICH THE JUDICIARY IS DEALING WITH HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES (NACION P16).

3. INTERIOR

THERE IS CONTINUING CONFUSION OVER FUNDS WHICH ALFONSIN PROMISED PROVINCIAL GOVERNORS TO ENABLE THEM TO PAY THE DECEMBER PUBLIC SECTOR WAGES AND END OF YEAR BONUSES. THE GOVERNORS WERE YESTERDAY TOLD BY INTERIOR MINISTER TROCCOLI THAT THEY WOULD RECEIVE AN 18 BILLION PESO SUBSIDY BY NEXT TUESDAY, THOUGH FINANCE SECRETARY NOBERTO BERTAINA LATER REAFFIRMED THAT THE FUNDS WOULD

SECRETARY NOBERTO BERTAINA LATER REAFFIRMED THAT THE FUNDS WOULD NOT BE AVAILABLE UNTIL EARLY JANUARY 1985 (PRENSA P1, HERALD P1, NACION P1).

TWO POLICEMEN WERE INJURED YESTERDAY IN A BOMB EXPLOSION AT A SAN MARTIN COURT HOUSE WHERE FORMER MONTONERO GUERRILLA MARIO FIRMENICH IS TO BE TRIED (HERALD P1).

4. FALKLANDS

IN REPORTING THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE'S FALKLANDS REPORT, MOST PAPERS GIVE EMPHASIS TO THEIR UNCERTAINTY OVER THE SOVEREIGNTY OF THE ISLANDS, THOUGH IT IS NOTED THAT ARGENTINA HAD PREJUDICED ITS CLAIM BY THE 1982 INVASION. LA PRENSA HEADLINES THE REPORT AS URGING MRS THATCHER TO SEEK RAPPROCHEMENT WITH ARGENTINA. ACCORDING TO QUOTE UKPOLITICAL SOURCES UNQUOTE THE REPORT WAS CERTAIN TO EMBARRASS THE GOVERNMENT. A SIGNED ARTICLE IN TIEMPO ARGENTINO CONTRASTS THE COMMITTEE'S SOVEREIGNTY DOUBTS WITH THE CERTAINTY OF PEOPLE HERE THAT THE ISLANDS ARE ARGENTINE (HERALD P20, NACION P4, PRENSA P1, TIEMPO P10).

IN REPORTING THE TELEVISED DEBATE BETWEEN FOREIGN MINISTER CAPUTO AND SIR NICHOLAS HENDERSON, CLARIN ALLEGES THAT THE LATTER'S PARTICIPATION WAS AN ATTEMPT BY THE GOVERNMENT TO PREPARE BRITISH PUBLIC OPINION FOR NEGOTIATIONS WHICH WILL INCLUDE SOVEREIGNTY. THE ARTICLE IS THEN MOSTLY DEVOTED TO CAPUTO'S ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE NEED FOR A DECLARATION OF A CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES. LA NACION AND LA PRENSA BOTH EMPHASISE CAPUTO'S STATEMENT THAT 'WHERE THERE'S A WILL THERE'S A WAY' (CLARIN P19, NACION P4, PRENSA P1, LA RAZON P-0, AMBITO P2).

AGENCY REPORTS NOTE THAT PRINCE ANDREW WILL BE RETURNING TO THE FALKLANDS IN THE FRIGATE HMS BRAZEN WHICH HAS BEEN ASSIGNED TO PATROL THE PROTECTION ZONE.

5. EXTERNAL

AT THE END OF HIS VISIT TO TOKYO, CAPUTO IS SAID TO HAVE TOLD REPORTERS THAT JAPAN IS FAVOURABLY DISPOSED TOWARDS PARTICIPATING WITH THE US AND EUROPEAN COUNTRIES IN A ONE BILLION DOLLAR CREDIT FOR ARGENTINA. HE THANKED HIS HOSTS FOR THEIR SUPPORT IN THE LAST UNGA FALKLANDS DEBATE AND MAINTAINED THAT THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT HAD INFORMED HIM THAT THEIR POSITION WILL NOT BE ALTERED. CAPUTO ALSO ANNOUNCED THAT ALFONSIN WOULD PAY AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO JAPAN NEXT YEAR (CLARIN P17, TIEMPO P9).

6. ARMED FORCES

TIEMPO ARGENTINO CARRIES A FULL PAGE 'SPECIAL REPORT' ON THE ARRIVAL HERE TOMORROW OF THE FIRST OF ARGENTINA'S TWO GERMAN-BUILT TR1700 SUBMARINES, THE SANTA CRUZ. THE CRAFT IS POWERED BY DIESEL ELECTRIC ENGINES AND IS SAID TO HAVE A RANGE OF 6,000 NAUTICAL MILES INCREASING TO 18,000 WHEN THE CRUISING SPEED IS REDUCED TO FIVE KNOTS. IT IS INTENDED THAT THE SUBMARINE WILL BE ARMED WITH GERMAN-MADE WIRE GUIDED TORPEDOES BUT IT COULD BE MODIFIED FOR THE AMERICAN MK49 OR FOR UNDER WATER MISSILES SUCH AS THE HARPOON OR THE SM39 EXOCET.

SHARKEY

POWELL-JONES

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