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DESKBY 0280900Z

FM BONN 0280755Z MAR 85

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 293 OF 28 MARCH

INFO PRIORITY BISBA BERNE, UKREP BRUSSELS FOR SECRETARY OF STATE'S PARTY

INFO SAVING WASHINGTON

ANGLO-ARGENTINE-GERMAN SEMINAR IN BONN

SUMMARY

1. ARGENTINE SENATORS NOT COMING TO LONDON TODAY. BUT REST OF ARGENTINE TEAM COMING: QUESTION OF CONTACT WITH FCO OFFICIALS AND POSSIBLY LADY YOUNG. LATEST IN A VISIT TO UK BY A PARLIAMENTARY TEAM WITHIN THREE MONTHS. AND IN POSSIBILITY OF RESUMING BERNE-TYPE CONTACT, TO PRODUCE INITIALLY A SMALL STEP ON EACH SIDE EG ARGENTINE DECLARATION OF FORMAL END OF HOSTILITIES AND BRITISH RELAXATION OF MARITIME RESTRICTIONS.

DETAIL

2. SIR J EBERLE AND SIR A MEYER MP GAVE MINISTER THIS MORNING AN ACCOUNT OF YESTERDAY'S ANGLO-ARGENTINE-GERMAN SEMINAR IN BONN, OSTENSIBLY ON ARGENTINA AND THE EC BUT IN FACT MOSTLY ABOUT BRITAIN AND ARGENTINA. AS WELL AS THE TRIPARTITE SEMINAR, THE BRITISH AND ARGENTINE TEAMS HAD A LONG INFORMAL BILATERAL. EBERLE SAID THE SEMINAR WENT WELL. APART FROM ONE LONG FORMAL EXPLANATION OF THE CLAIM TO FALKLANDS SOVEREIGNTY, THE ARGENTINE PARTICIPANTS WERE COOPERATIVE AND THOUGHTFUL. DESPITE THE VARIETY OF OPINIONS AMONG THEM, THEY MAINTAINED A LARGELY UNITED FRONT. THEY MADE A STRONG PITCH ABOUT ARGENTINA'S ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES AND THE DEBT, AND THE LIKELY EFFECTS ON DEMOCRACY AND SOCIAL COHESION.

3. THE ARGENTINE PARTICIPANTS WANT TO EXPLORE THE IDEA OF ANOTHER SUCH MEETING, WITHOUT RUSHING OR RAISING EXPECTATIONS. THEY ALSO WANT TO ARRANGE FOR A MIXED TEAM OF ARGENTINE PARLIAMENTARIANS TO VISIT UK WITHIN 3 MONTHS. AS REGARDS INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONTACT, THEY WERE INTERESTED IN THE POSSIBILITY OF BERNE-TYPE CONTACT BEING RESUMED WITHIN A YEAR OR SO. CAREFUL PREPARATION WOULD BE NEEDED. THE LEVEL SHOULD NOT BE SENIOR. THE AGENDA MIGHT CONCENTRATE AT FIRST ON SMALL STEPS TO BREAK THE LONG JAM IN RELATIONS BUT THE POSSIBILITY OF DISCUSSING SOVEREIGNTY LATER MUST REMAIN OPEN. THE FIRST SMALL STEPS MIGHT BE AN ARGENTINE DECLARATION OF A FORMAL END TO HOSTILITIES AND A BRITISH REDUCTION IN MARITIME RESTRICTIONS.

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4. THE TWO SENATORS IN THE ARGENTINE DELEGATION ARE NOT (NOT) COMING ON TO LONDON TODAY. EBERLE AND MEYER WERE CONVINCED BY THE REASON GIVEN: THAT IF THE SENATORS CAME WITHOUT MPS FROM OTHER PARTIES, THEY WOULD CAUSE A ROW IN BUENOS AIRES WHICH WOULD SET BACK THE CAUSE OF REBUILDING CONTACTS WITH UK. THE REST OF THE DELEGATION TRAVELS TO LONDON THIS MORNING. HELBLING OF THE ARGENTINE FOREIGN AFFAIRS INSTITUTE ASKED EBERLE WHETHER HE COULD MEET FCO OFFICIALS AND POSSIBLY LADY YOUNG. EBERLE REPLIED THAT CONTACT WITH OFFICIALS TODAY OR TOMORROW MIGHT BE POSSIBLE; THAT THERE WOULD BE NO QUESTION OF A CALL ON LADY YOUNG; BUT THAT HE WOULD SEE WHETHER AN ENCOUNTER WITH LADY YOUNG AT A SOCIAL OCCASION MIGHT BE POSSIBLE. HE IS NOT PRESSING FOR THIS LAST.
FCO PLEASE PASS TO WASHINGTON
BULLARD

[REPEATED AS REQUESTED]

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