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IMMEDIATE LIMA

TELEGRAM NUMBER 106 OF 7 MAY

ARMS SUPPLIES TO ARGENTINA.

1. THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE HAVE RECEIVED INFORMATION ABOUT THE SUPPLY OF 4 EXOCET AIR-LAUNCHED MISSILES TO PERU. FOLLOWING THE SINKING OF HMS SHEFFIELD BY MISSILE THEY ARE MOST CONCERNED ABOUT THE SUPPLY TO ARGENTINA OF THESE MISSILES WHICH UNDER A COLLABORATIVE PROGRAMME INCORPORATE BRITISH-MADE COMPONENTS. ACCORDING TO OUR INFORMATION PERU HAS BOTH SHIP LAUNCHED AND AIR TO SURFACE VERSIONS.

2. PLEASE APPROACH THE PERUVIAN GOVERNMENT TO VOICE OUR CONCERN THAT THESE MISSILES SHOULD NOT BE MADE AVAILABLE TO ARGENTINA. YOU SHOULD EMPHASISE THAT, DESPITE THE SUSPENSION OF THE PERUVIAN INITIATIVE, THERE IS ADMIRATION IN BRITAIN FOR PRESIDENT BELAUNDE'S STATEMANSHIP IN THIS DISPUTE AND THE PERUVIAN GOVERNMENT'S CLEAR CONCERN TO AVOID FURTHER ESCALATION OF THE CONFLICT AND UNNECESSARY BLOODSHED. TO REINFORCE ATTEMPTS TO REACH A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT WE WISH TO SEEK ASSURANCES THAT THE PERUVIAN GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO TAKE A RESTRAINED POSITION AND IN PARTICULAR THAT THERE WILL BE NO QUESTION OF PERU SUPPLYING ARGENTINA WITH ANY ARMS, PARTICULARLY MISSILES. SUCH ASSURANCES WOULD BE CENTRAL TO OUR CONTINUED HOPE THAT PERU WILL BE ABLE TO PLAY A RENEWED ROLE IN ACHIEVING THE NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT WE ALL DESIRE. THEY WOULD OF COURSE BE VERY MUCH IN THE INTERESTS OF THE LONG TERM FUTURE OF PERUVIAN-BRITISH RELATIONS, IN WHICH BOTH COUNTRIES HAVE INVESTED SO MUCH EFFORT OVER RECENT YEARS AND WHICH HOLD CONSIDERABLE POTENTIAL.

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