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FM MADRID 131618Z MAY 82
TO PRIORITY FCO
TELEGRAM NUMBER 272 OF 13 MAY
INFO WASHINGTON UKMIS NEW YORK



MY TELNO 248:

SPANISH MEDIA COVERAGE OF FALKLANDS

1. SPANISH PRESS REPORTING OF THE DISPUTE HAS BEEN MUCH MORE BALANCED THIS WEEK WITH ADEQUATE REPORTING AND QUOTATIONS FROM BRITISH MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS AND MOD PRESS BRIEFINGS. ALTHOUGH SPAIN'S SYMPATHIES ARE BASICALLY WITH ARGENTINA, THE MORE LIBERAL PRESS HAVE PUBLISHED ARTICLES AND EDITORIALS STRONGLY CRITICAL OF THE ARGENTINE AGGRESSION AND OF THE JUNTA. THE MORE POPULAR DIARIO 16 HAS GIVEN PROMINENCE TO THE STORY THAT ONE OF THE ARGENTINE'S CAPTURED IN SOUTH GEORGIA IS A LEADING TORTURER IN WHOSE RELEASE BOTH FRANCE AND SWEDEN ARE TAKING AN ACTIVE INTEREST NEVERTHELESS EVEN THE FAVOURABLE ARTICLES SUGGEST THAT THE UK HAS OVER-REACTED AND SHOULD CONSIDER LONGER TERM CONSEQUENCES FOR NORTH SOUTH AND EAST/WEST RELATIONS. THE RIGHT WING PRESS (ALCAZAR AND YA) CONTINUE THEIR ANTI-BRITISH CAMPAIGN AND THEIR STRONG CRITICISM OF THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT'S FAILURE TO SUPPORT THEIR LATIN AMERICAN BROTHERS. THE US IS ALSO CRITICISED FOR SUPPORTING THE UK.

2. THE STATE RUN TELEVISION DURING THE LAST TWO WEEKS HAS BEEN EXTREMELY BIASED IN FAVOUR OF ARGENTINA, CARRYING THEIR WORST PROPOGANDA WITHOUT QUALIFICATION. IT WAS THIS KIND OF BIAS THAT LEAD TO MY REQUEST FOR TEMPORARY REINSTATEMENT OF THE BBC SPANISH SERVICE (TELNO 151). WHILST I APPRECIATE YOUR REASONS FOR NOT WANTING TO START UP THE SERVICE AGAIN, I HOPE YOU WILL GIVE FAVOURABLE CONSIDERATION TO THE PROPOSALS BELOW.

3. I AM CALLING ON ROBLES PIQUER THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF RADIO AND TV ON 14 MAY TO REMONSTRATE PRIVATELY. PART OF THE PROBLEM IS THE LACK OF TV FILM MATERIAL FROM LONDON AND THE LANGUAGE BARRIER. I INTEND TO OFFER TV ASSISTANCE IN OVERCOMING THIS PROBLEM. I HAVE IN MIND THAT MR GAREL JONES, THE SPANISH SPEAKING GOVERNMENT WHIP, COULD GIVE INTERVIEWS TO THE SPANISH TV

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CORRESPONDENT IN LONDON, TAILORED TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF SPAIN'S SPECIAL POSITION, WHICH HE KNOWS WELL. THIS WOULD GIVE SPANISH VIEWERS A CHANCE TO HEAR OUR SIDE OF THE ISSUE ALMOST FOR THE FIRST TIME (THE SPANISH TV CORRESPONDENT IN LONDON BEING REALLY TERRIBLE). IT WOULD ALSO COUNTER BALANCE ARGENTINE MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS. A RADIO FEED TO THE STATE RADIO NETWORK WOULD ALSO BE A VALUABLE MEANS OF PUTTING OVER THE BRITISH POSITION IN SPAIN (FCO TEL 228 TO MONTEVIDEO REFERS). I HOPE THAT YOU CAN AGREE THAT SPAIN SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN THIS SERVICE IF WE CAN INTEREST ONE OF THE NETWORKS IN TAKING IT.

4. RADIO REPORTING HAS BEEN MIXED, BUT THE MANY PHONE-IN PROGRAMMES HAVE SHOWN A CLEAR PRO-ARGENTINE AND ANTI-BRITISH BIAS FROM THE PUBLIC.

5. I WILL REPORT FURTHER AFTER MY MEETING WITH ROBLES PIQUER. BUT I BELIEVE THAT SPECIFIC ACTION IS NECESSARY TO COUNTERACT THE IMPACT BEING MADE HERE BY TV. THE ONLY WAY TO ACHIEVE THIS IS BY THE PROVISION OF MORE NEWS FILM FROM LONDON. TV IS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT IN SPAIN WHERE NEWSPAPER READERSHIP IS LOW. BUT RADIO IS ALSO IMPORTANT.

PARSONS

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HD/PUSD
DEP HD/PUSD
PS
PS/MR HURD
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