

ARGENTINA/FALKLANDS

R. A. Smith
CD 207x

Copies All (e)
Private Secretary
PS / Mr. [unclear]
Mr. [unclear]
Mr. Tatham FIO.

CHANNEL 4 NEWS : ARGENTINE FOREIGN MINISTER DR CAPUTO INTERVIEWED ON
FALKLANDS : 18 OCTOBER 1988

Foreign Minister Dr Caputo, now President of the General Assembly at the United Nations told us that the government is ready to drop the preconditions that have blocked all attempts at diplomacy on the Falklands.

Dr Caputo: I think there is a little light at the end of the tunnel. I do not want to disappoint anyone, if afterwards there is no light. But I think there is a very small light at the end of the tunnel. I think the priority now is to start the dialogue. I think that we have common history in both countries, if we start a dialogue without preconditions, just the dialogue. This is going to be very important and we are going to find a way to continue the dialogue.

Interviewer: You say without preconditions. Does that mean without discussing sovereignty?

Dr Caputo: I think I am saying without preconditions. This is very precise formula, without preconditions. No preconditions from our side, no preconditions from their side.

Interviewer: But is there anything that makes you believe that Mrs Thatcher is ready to talk to you?

Dr Caputo: I do not know, just let me insist that idea, that I see a small light at the end of the tunnel.

Interviewer: Before you leave office?

Dr Caputo: Yes before, I hope so. I think it will be useful for both of us. I mean your country and mine.

Interview with Carlos Menem : Peronist Candidate

Interviewer: The government says it is prepared to negotiate with Britain without preconditions. Are you?

Menem: Sovereignty has got to be on the table, otherwise there is no point in talking. I do not have any problem negotiating with Mrs Thatcher as long as she knows that the Islands' sovereignty is ours.

The interview concluded with the following "statement" by the Foreign Office:

The British Government is determined to seek more normal relations with Argentina and uphold its commitment to the Falkland Islanders. Sovereignty is not for discussion. We have repeatedly offered to discuss practical issues as a step towards achieving more normal relations. But Argentina's response has so far been disappointing. If Argentina genuinely wishes to improve relations with Britain, she can do so by responding to the large number of British proposals already on President Alfonsin's table.

