

ADVANCE PIES: FALKLAND ISLANDS GENERAL (39)

PS
PS/MR HURD
PS/MR ONSLOW
PS/PUS
MR BULLARD
SIR I SINCLAIR
MR GIFFARD
MR WRIGHT
MR ADAMS
LORD N GORDON LENNOX
LORD BRIDGES
MR URE
MR GILLMORE
HD/PUSD (2)
HD/S Am D
HD/DEFENCE D
HD/NEWS D
HD/ERD
HD/ECD(E)
HD/UND
HD/PLANNING STAFF
MR ANTHONY WILLIAMS W60
EMERGENCY UNIT
RESIDENT CLERK

PS/No 10 DOWNING ST (2)

PS/S OF S FOR DEFENCE

MR J STEWART AUSD STAFF MOD

PS/CHANCELLOR }
MR ILETT } TREASURY
MR LITTLER }

MISS DICKSON D/ENERGY

SIR R ARMSTRONG }
SIR M PALLISER } CABINET OFFICE
MR WADE-GERY }
MR FULLER SAPU/DIO }
DIO }

~~Room 8 FOR MODUK c IN C FLEET~~

[Passed to E.R.]

[Typists a.a.]

GRS

SECRET

FM BRASILIA 010245Z JUN 81
TO IMMEDIATE DESKBY 010400Z MODUK
AND TO IMMEDIATE DESKBY 010800Z FCO

SIC UBA

FOR BGS (INT) AND DIC ARMS CELL FROM BRITAIRAT.

LIBYAN ARMS FOR ARGENTINA

1. I HAVE JUST RETURNED FROM RECIFE AND MY INVESTIGATION HAS REVEALED THE FOLLOWING (SOME OF WHICH HAS ALREADY BEEN PASSED IN PREVIOUS SIGNALS):

A. THERE HAVE BEEN TO DATE TWO RETURN FLIGHTS TO LIBYA VIA RECIFE FROM ARGENTINA. THE RETURN JOURNEY OF THE THIRD FLIGHT IS LIKELY TO TAKE PLACE TONIGHT 31 MAY/1 JUN. DETAILS OF THESE FLIGHTS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

1) FLIGHT NUMBER ONE (UNDERLINED)
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I) FLIGHT NUMBER ONE (UNDERLINED)

~~THIS WAS AN ARGENTINE AIRFORCE BOEING 707 AIRCRAFT WHICH PASSED THROUGH RECIFE NORTHBOUND ON MAY 25TH. THE TAIL NUMBER WAS TC 93. THE AIRCRAFT WAS BASED AT EL PALOMAR AND WAS FROM ONE BRIGADA AEREA. THE CAPTAIN'S NAME WAS CASTIELLA AND THERE WERE SIX OR SEVEN OTHER CREW MEMBERS, OF WHOM IT APPEARED THAT THREE WERE CIVILIANS AND FOUR MILITARY, JUDGING FROM THE NUMBER WEARING UNIFORMS. TWO OR THREE OF THE CREW WERE ARMED. THE PLANE WAS EMPTY OF CARGO AND ONLY TOOK ON A FULL FUEL LOAD. FROM ENQUIRIES THE CAPTAIN MADE AT THE AIRPORT REGARDING WEATHER IT APPEARED THAT HE INTENDED TO GO DIRECT TO TRIPOLI AND NOT STAGE THROUGH LAS PALMAS ALTHOUGH THIS APPEARED ON THE FLIGHT PLAN.~~

II) FLIGHT NUMBER TWO (UNDERLINED)

THE SAME AIRFORCE 707 RETURNED TO RECIFE ON 27 MAY LANDING 2307 GMT AND DEPARTED AGAIN SOUTHBOUND AT 0005 GMT ON 28 MAY. DURING THE HOUR ON THE GROUND THE AIRCRAFT ONLY TOOK ON FUEL. THE AIRCRAFT IS BELIEVED TO HAVE COME DIRECT FROM TRIPOLI. THE SOURCE AT RECIFE WAS ABLE TO SEE THE INSIDE OF THE AIRCRAFT DURING THE TURN-ROUND AND REPORTED SEEING SIX LONG BOXES, APPROX 5 METERS IN LENGTH, IN PAIRS BEHIND EACH OTHER RUNNING ALONG THE LENGTH OF THE FUSELAGE. MANY SMALL WOODEN BOXES WERE LOADED ON TOP. NONE OF THE BOXES WERE MARKED AND THE SUGGESTION THAT EXOCET MISSILES MIGHT HAVE BEEN CONTAINED IN THE LONG BOXES IS BASED UPON THEIR SIZE AND SHAPE. ON BOTH ITS LANDING AND TAKE-OFF RUN AT RECIFE THE AIRCRAFT WAS OBSERVED TO USE A LOT OF RUNWAY, CONSISTENT WITH A HEAVY LOAD OF CARGO.

III) FLIGHT NUMBER THREE (UNDERLINED)

DURING THE EVENING OF MAY 28TH A BOEING 707 OF THE AIRLINE AEROLINEAS ARGENTINAS (CARGO VERSION) LANDED AT RECIFE TO REFUEL NORTHBOUND FROM ARGENTINA TO TRIPOLI. THE AIRCRAFT WAS OBSERVED TO BE EMPTY. IT IS BELIEVED THAT THE FLIGHT NUMBER WAS 1417. THE DAC AUTHORISATION NUMBER WAS 689/PL2. THE CAPTAIN'S NAME WAS CUNIVERT AND HE WAS APPARENTLY A CIVILIAN. THE REST OF THE CREW WERE A MIX OF MILITARY AND CIVILIANS.

IV) FLIGHT NUMBER FOUR (UNDERLINED)

THIS WAS THE BOEING 707 ON ITS RETURN FLIGHT FROM TRIPOLI. IT LANDED AT RECIFE AT 0640GMT ON 30 MAY, DEPARTING SOUTHBOUND AT 0755 GMT. IT WAS REFUELLED ONLY, TAKING ON A FULL FUEL LOAD AND REQUIRED NO OTHER HANDLING OR SERVICING. ITS FLIGHT NUMBER WAS AR 1417. THE FLIGHT PLAN INDICATED STAGING THROUGH LAS PALMAS EN ROUTE FROM TRIPOLI TO RECIFE BUT REMARKS MADE BY THE CREW APPEARED TO INDICATE THAT IN FACT THE AIRCRAFT CAME DIRECT. THE CREW WERE THE SAME AS FOR FLIGHT NUMBER THREE. JUST INSIDE THE AIRCRAFT FRONT DOOR ON THE RIGHT WERE THREE BUNK BEDS, ONE ABOVE

EN ROUTE FROM TRIPOLI TO RECIFE BUT REMARKS MADE BY THE CREW APPEARED TO INDICATE THAT IN FACT THE AIRCRAFT CAME DIRECT. THE CREW WERE THE SAME AS FOR FLIGHT NUMBER THREE. JUST INSIDE THE AIRCRAFT FRONT DOOR ON THE RIGHT WERE THREE BUNK BEDS, ONE ABOVE THE OTHER, MAKING IT VERY DIFFICULT FOR MY SOURCE TO GET A GOOD IDEA OF THE NATURE OF THE CARGO. IT WAS CLEARLY FULL OF WOODEN BOXES BUT IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE THIS TIME TO DETERMINE THEIR SIZES. THIS AIRCRAFT HAD A LONGER LANDING AND TAKE-OFF RUN THAN THE MILITARY AIRCRAFT (AND CONSIDERABLY LONGER THAN THAT NORMALLY USED BY A PASSENGER 707). THE AIRCRAFT HAD THE LETTERS "GO" PAINTED ON THE NOSEWHEEL DOORS AND ON THE NOSE. THERE WAS NO NUMBER AT ALL ON THE AIRCRAFT TAIL.

V) FLIGHT NUMBER FIVE (UNDERLINED)

EN ROUTE FROM ARGENTINA TO LIBYA. I PERSONALLY OBSERVED ANOTHER AEROLINEAS ARGENTINAS BOEING 707 LAND AT 2230 ON 30 MAY TAKING OFF AGAIN NORTHBOUND AT APPROX 2300GMT. THE AIRCRAFT RECEIVED FUEL ONLY, AND DURING ITS TURN-ROUND WAS PARKED A LITTLE WAY FROM THE AIRPORT TERMINAL BUILDING AT RECIFE. IN COMPANY WITH MY SOURCE I WAS ABLE TO GET INSIDE THE RESTRICTED AREA AND OBSERVE THE TURN-ROUND ACTIVITY IN THE DARK FROM A POSITION NO MORE THAN 15 METERS FROM THE AIRCRAFT. DURING THE TURN-ROUND THE CAPTAIN AND TWO OTHER MEMBERS OF HIS CREW TALKED ON THE GROUND WITH THE ARGENTINE CONSUL. THREE OTHER CREW MEMBERS WERE OBVIOUSLY GUARDING THE AIRCRAFT AND WERE CLEARLY ARMED. ONE OF THEM WAS POSITIONED AT THE TOP OF THE AIRCRAFT STEPS TO PREVENT ANYBODY ENTERING THE AIRCRAFT. THE FLIGHT NUMBER (FROM A COPY OF THE FLIGHT PLAN SOURCE WAS ABLE TO PROCURE FOR ME) WAS AR 1420 AND THE REGISTRATION MARK WAS LV JGR. THE NAMES OF THE CREW WERE AS FOLLOWS: COMMANDANTE SAN JUAN CARLOS, DEPUTY COMMANDANTE BIRO VALENTIA, DEPUTY COMMANDANTE LEVAGGI ANGEL, TWO TECHNICIANS MENENDEZ VICENTE AND LIMA MARCELO, STEWARD DORA GUSTAVO, TWO OTHER CREW MEMBERS CARIDI JOSE AND TORIELLI.

B. I DID NOT SEE ANYONE IN AN AIRFORCE UNIFORM. THOSE VISIBLE ALL APPEARED TO BE CIVILIANS. IT WOULD APPEAR FROM THE TREND OF THE PREVIOUS FLIGHTS THAT FLIGHT AR 1417 WILL STAGE BACK THROUGH RECIFE SOMETIME DURING THE HOURS OF DARKNESS ON THE NIGHT 31 MAY/1 JUNE, ALMOST CERTAINLY DIRECT FROM TRIPOLI AND WITH A FULL CARGO LOAD. MY SOURCE WILL DO ALL HE CAN TO ENTER THE AIRCRAFT AND TAKE NOTE OF WHAT IS CONTAINED THEREIN.

2. COMMENT (UNDERLINED)

A. THE FIRST RETURN FLIGHT IN THE MILITARY BOEING 707 MUST HAVE RECEIVED DIPLOMATIC CLEARANCE FROM THE MINISTERIO DA AERONAUTICA IN BRASILIA AND I WOULD IMAGINE THAT THERE MUST HAVE

A. THE AIRCRAFT WAS NOT INSPECTED IN RECIFE. THE BOEING 707 HAVE RECEIVED DIPLOMATIC CLEARANCE FROM THE MINISTERIO DA AERONAUTICA IN BRASILIA AND I WOULD IMAGINE THAT THERE MUST HAVE BEEN KNOWLEDGE OF THE FLIGHT AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS. ALSO THAT, AS THE FLIGHT WAS RETURNING THROUGH RECIFE FROM TRIPOLI IT MUST HAVE CONTAINED ARMS/WEAPONS OF SOME SORT. NO ATTEMPT WAS MADE TO INSPECT THE CARGO ON THE GROUND.

B. THE SUBSEQUENT FLIGHTS IN BOEING 707S OR AEROLINEAS ARGENTINAS WOULD HAVE MERELY HAD TO RECEIVE AN AUTHORISATION NUMBER FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF CIVIL AVIATION (ONE OF THE DEPARTMENTS UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE AIR MINISTER). IN ALL CASES FLIGHT PLANS SUBMITTED CLEARLY INDICATED AN ULTIMATE DESTINATION OF TRIPOLI, HOWEVER THE FIRST RETURNING CIVILIAN 707 PASSED THROUGH RECIFE SOUTHBOUND WITHOUT ANY DELAYS AND THERE WAS NO SUGGESTION THAT ITS CARGO SHOULD BE INSPECTED.

C. IT IS MY JUDGEMENT THAT THE SOURCE REFERRED TO, WHO HAS BEEN INVALUABLE, IS TOTALLY RELIABLE AND ONLY AIMS TO PROVIDE AS MUCH ACCURATE INFORMATION AS IS POSSIBLE. HIS OWN REPORTED OBSERVATIONS WERE AT TIMES BACKED UP BY COPIES OF DOCUMENTS WHICH HE WAS ABLE TO OBTAIN.

D. IT WOULD CLEARLY BE QUITE IMPOSSIBLE TO DO MORE THAN OBSERVE THE NUMBER AND SIZE OF THE BOXES CONTAINED IN THE AIRCRAFT, SINCE IT WAS AT ALL TIMES CAREFULLY GUARDED INSIDE AND OUT, SOME OF THE GUARDS BEING ARMED AND CLEARLY WELL AWARE OF THEIR RESPONSIBILITY FOR KEEPING ANYONE AWAY FROM THE AIRCRAFT.

E. THE VIEW IS THUS EXPRESSED THAT EXOCET MISSILES COULD HAVE BEEN CARRIED BACK TO ARGENTINA ON FLIGHT NO TWO AS SIX BOXES APPEARED TO HAVE BEEN LARGE ENOUGH TO CONTAIN THIS MISSILE. PARA 2. OF UBA 311400Z MAY SHOULD BE TREATED WITH RESERVE AS CLEARLY IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO SAY AT THIS STAGE WHAT MAY BE CARRIED ON THIS FLIGHT.

HARDING

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SENT/RECD AT 01:0435Z BRL/RR