

Hd/E.R.

FLASH

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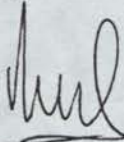
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COMMUNICATIONS OPERATIONS

DEPARTMENT

Date 23/4

p.a.

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FM WASHINGTON 231728Z APR 82

TO FLASH F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 1416 OF 23 APRIL 1982.

FLASH

Hd/E.R. (Referred re.
distbn.)
R/C

MY TELEGRAM NO 1329: FALKLANDS: SATELLITE COVERAGE.

1. BRITISH DEFENCE INTELLIGENCE LIAISON STAFF ARE REPORTING TO MOD THAT WE HAVE LEARNED THIS MORNING, OF AN ARGENTINIAN REQUEST TO NASA TO PROGRAMME LANDSAT TO MAKE A PASS OVER SOUTH GEORGIA TODAY. WE HAVE LEARNED ADDITIONALLY, THAT THEIR REQUEST FOR COVERAGE OF THE FALKLAND ISLANDS ON 21, 22 AND 23 APRIL WAS FOR A "BLOCK OF NINE FRAMES", NOT SIMPLY THREE AS WE HAD EARLIER UNDERSTOOD. THIS PHOTOGRAPHY, ALTHOUGH ONLY MULTISPECTRAL, WILL HAVE COVERED A VERY SUBSTANTIAL AREA OF SEA (ESTIMATED AT 350 MILES SQ). WE HAVE NO DETAILS OF THE AREA TO BE COVERED OVER SOUTH GEORGIA.

2. WE UNDERSTAND FROM OUR SOURCE (U.K. LIAISON OFFICER AT U.S. DEFENCE MAPPING AGENCY) THAT TODAY'S PASS OVER SOUTH GEORGIA WOULD ALREADY HAVE TAKEN PLACE BY THE TIME WE LEARNED OF IT. THE ARGENTINIANS WILL PRESUMABLY HAVE BEEN ABLE TO GET THIS ON THEIR DOWN LINK.

3. MINISTER HAS TRIED TO SPEAK AT ONCE TO EAGLEBURGER OR BURT, NEITHER OF WHOM WAS AVAILABLE. HE HAS THEREFORE TOLD EAGLEBURGER'S OFFICE THAT WE ARE VERY DISTURBED TO LEARN OF THIS REPORT, BOTH BECAUSE OF THE VARIATIONS FROM WHAT WE HAD EARLIER BEEN TOLD ABOUT THE PASSES OVER THE FALKLAND ISLANDS, AND MORE PARTICULARLY ABOUT THE NEW INFORMATION ABOUT S. GEORGIA. MOREOVER, IF OUR EARLIER UNDERSTANDING WAS CORRECT THAT IT NEEDED A WEEK'S ADVANCE NOTICE TO PROGRAMME LANDSAT TO TAKE PICTURES OF A PARTICULAR TARGET AREA, IT SEEMED POSSIBLE THAT THE ARGENTINIAN REQUEST FOR COVERAGE OF SOUTH GEORGIA HAD BEEN RECEIVED LATE. IN EITHER CASE, GIVEN THE DELICACY OF THE PRESENT SITUATION, WE WOULD HAVE HOPED THAT ADMINISTRATIVE MEANS COULD HAVE BEEN FOUND TO DEFLECT THE REQUEST. MINISTER ASKED EAGLEBURGER'S OFFICE TO LOOK URGENTLY INTO THE QUESTION AND LET US KNOW URGENTLY WHERE THINGS NOW STAND. HE WILL TAKE IT UP WITH BURT OR EAGLEBURGER AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

4. IT WILL NOT HELP US TO GET BETTER HANDLING OF THIS PROBLEM FROM THE AMERICANS IF THIS LEAKS: HENCE THE CLASSIFICATION OF THIS TELEGRAM.

HENDERSON

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