

217. Telegram From the Embassy in Argentina to the Department of State¹

Buenos Aires, May 4, 1982, 1916Z

2785. Subject: Sinking of the Belgrano: Alleged U.S. Role.

1. (C-Entire text.)

2. We continue to make no headway in our efforts to put at rest the story that the U.S. provided satellite intelligence which permitted the British to locate and sink the "Belgrano." Army Chief of Staff Vaquero sent me word this morning that the Argentines have "concrete proof" that such was the case. Has Mallea Gil been briefed on this issue?

¹ Source: Department of State, Central Foreign Policy File, D820233-0368. Confidential; Niact Immediate; Exdis. Attached to another copy of the telegram is a May 4 note from Poindexter to Howe that reads: "Anything you can do to stop discussion of intelligence would be appreciated." (Washington National Records Center, OSD Files, FRC 330-84-0003, Argentina (Jan-15 May) 1982))

3. Telam, the government wire service here, is carrying a story quoting an unnamed informant in the Pentagon to the effect that the U.S. has "at least one spy satellite" in the South Atlantic and that a great part of the information which it obtains is transmitted to the U.K.

4. Another of our problems is created by the NOAA satellite photographs of the weather over the Falklands which are appearing in the local press. The distinction between weather satellites and those used to obtain military information is not one likely to be grasped very easily by the Argentine public.

5. The press here has also picked up a purported statement by Secretary Weinberger that we would provide the U.K. with every kind of support, including logistical, material and information. This last is taken as confirmation of the allegation.

Shlaudeman