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FM SANTIAGO 032000Z AUG 82
TO PRIORITY FCO
TELEGRAM NUMBER 375 OF 4 AUGUST
INFO PRIORITY CIVIL COMMISSIONER PORT STANLEY

MS

YOUR TELNO 309 : AIRCRAFT FOR FALKLAND ISLANDS

1. I HAVE TAKEN SOUNDINGS FROM GENERAL MATTHEI VIA OUR CONTACT WITH GENERAL RODRIGUEZ AND RECEIVED A CAUTIOUS REPLY.
2. MATTHEI WOULD NOT WISH US TO LEASE ANY CHILEAN CIVIL AIRCRAFT FOR INTERNAL AIR SERVICES ON THE FALKLANDS, SINCE HE THOUGHT THIS WOULD PUT CHILE IN A DIFFICULT POSITION WITH ARGENTINA. NOR WAS HE AT ALL KEEN TO ALLOW US TO STAGE BRITISH-REGISTERED AIRCRAFT THROUGH CHILE TO THE FALKLANDS.

*Paragraph 3 deleted and retained
under Section 3(4).*

*M Wayland
27 April 2012*

4. THE CHILEAN AIR FORCE REACTION TO THIS REQUEST UNDERLINES THEIR SENSITIVITY OVER SUCH MATTERS. THEY ARE MOST ANXIOUS TO HELP BUT MUST USUALLY BE GIVEN AN ESCAPE ROUTE SO THAT THEY CAN DENY DIRECT INVOLVMENT SHOULD ANY CRITICISM BE DIRECTED AT THEM SUBSEQUENTLY. THIS ATTITUDE CONTRASTS SHARPLY WITH THAT OF THE CHILEAN NAVY REPORTED IN MY TELEGRAM NUMBER 373. THE REASON COULD BE SIMPLY THAT SHIPS ARE HARDER TO CONCEAL THAN AIRCRAFT, BUT WE ALSO KNOW FROM PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE THAT THE NAVY ARE APT TO OVERPLAY THEIR HAND.

HICKMAN

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