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FM WASHINGTON 070055Z APR 82  
TO IMMEDIATE FCO  
TELEGRAM NO 1148 OF 6 APRIL  
AND TO MODUK  
INFO PRIORITY UKMIS NEW YORK, ADMINISTRATOR ASCENSION ISLAND

FALKLANDS

1. THE PENTAGON SPOKESMAN WAS ASKED TODAY WHETHER THE UNITED STATES INTENDED TO GIVE MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO BRITAIN OR TO ARGENTINA IN THE FALKLANDS DISPUTE. THE SPOKESMAN SAID THAT THE UNITED STATES INTENDED TO STEER A COURSE QUOTE DOWN THE MIDDLE UNQUOTE AND NOT TO GIVE ANY HELP EITHER WAY. THE SPOKESMAN (CATTO) CONFIRMED THAT BRITAIN HAD THE RIGHT TO STAGE MILITARY AIRCRAFT THROUGH ASCENSION ISLAND, A BRITISH POSSESSION ON WHICH THE US AIR FORCE MAINTAINS THE RUNWAY AND TRACKING STATION. THE UNITED STATES WAS UNDER AN OBLIGATION UNDER THE 1962 AGREEMENT GOVERNING THE USE OF THE AIRFIELD TO COOPERATE IN THE USE OF LOGISTICAL, ADMINISTRATIVE OR OPERATING FACILITIES.

2. WE HAVE SPOKEN TO WEINBERGER'S OFFICE TO PROTEST AT THESE REMARKS, WHICH CONTAINED NO REFERENCE TO ARGENTINA'S INVASION OF THE FALKLANDS, THE U.S. DENUNCIATION OF THAT ACTION AND CALL FOR ARGENTINIAN WITHDRAWAL. WEINBERGER'S PRINCIPAL MILITARY ASSISTANT, GENERAL SMITH, APOLOGIZED FOR THE IMPRESSION LEFT BY CATTO AND SAID THAT THE UNITED STATES WAS CERTAINLY NOT NEUTRAL ON THE QUESTION OF SECURING ARGENTINA'S WITHDRAWAL. WE HAVE SPOKEN IN SIMILAR TERMS BUT IN LOWER KEY TO MCFARLANE (NSC) WHO TOOK THE POINT AT ONCE.

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