

633
403



To Wright

TOP SECRET AND PERSONAL

PS/PUS

We really must respect the confidences of the French, but I don't think that there is anything more to be done, ^{beyond Sir R. Armstrong's letter.}

(575)

The PUS has asked on the attached letter from Sir R. Armstrong what we know of the recent contacts with the French military authorities about the performance of French aircraft operated by the Argentine Air Force.

2. The only information that I have seen is contained in the attached telegram from the Defence Attaché in Paris dated 21 April, from which you will see that military contacts with the French on the Falklands crisis have been handled in a highly restricted way. I recall that Mr. Nott followed up the suggestion that he should send a message to M. Hernu, but I have not been able to lay my hands on a copy of it. It was, as I recall, in very general terms.

(P.R.H. Wright)
4 May, 1982.

Mr. Gorman } shall see
Mr. Gordon } ^{6/5}

~~Mr. Bullard~~ } No copy of this had reached me.
~~Private Secretary~~ } ^{6/5}

Mr. Nott certainly wrote to Mr. Hernu, but we do not have a copy here.
fitting
6/5.

Mr. Wright ^{7/5}

TOP SECRET AND PERSONAL

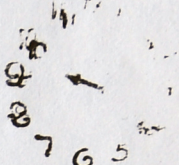
~~Defence Dept~~ to pa
7/5

XX GR180

21 APR 82

A/FO C1/2'

(138)



E. R.

Mr Gillman

Mr Weston

Head / WED.

W.B. only

SECRET UK EYES A
 M BRITDEFAT PARIS
 TO IMMEDIATE MODUK
 DTG 210800Z APR 82
 SIC AAA/A2M/A2G

EXCLUSIVE FOR PS/SECRETARY OF STATE. INFO EXCLUSIVE PSO/CAS.
FRENCH AIR FORCE/AERONAVALE ASSISTANCE TO ROYAL AIR FORCE.

2/4

1. YOU WILL BE AWARE OF THE ABOVE WHICH IS DUE TO TAKE PLACE AS DISCREETLY AS POSSIBLE 22/23 APR 82. IN MAKING THE ARRANGEMENTS YESTERDAY, HEAD OF THE FRENCH AIR FORCE, GENERAL FLEURY, COULD NOT HAVE BEEN MORE HELPFUL. WHEN WE HAD AGREED THE FORMAT FOR THE PRACTICE COMBAT TRAINING HARRIER VERSUS MIRAGE I WAS TOLD THAT M. HERNU WOULD LIKE TO SEE ME. THE MINISTER, HAVING STRESSED THE PARAMOUNT NEED FOR NO PUBLICITY OF THE EXCHANGE, THEN ASKED ME IF I WAS SATISFIED WITH WHAT THE FRENCH AIR FORCES WERE PROVIDING IN RESPONSE TO OUR REQUEST. I SAID I WAS CERTAIN WE WOULD BE VERY SATISFIED AND THAT I THOUGHT THE SPEED OF REACTION OF THE FAF IN MEETING OUR SHORT NOTICE REQUEST WAS REMARKABLE. M. HERNU THEN ASKED ME TO PASS HIS REGARDS TO MR NOTT WITH THE MESSAGE THAT IF THERE WAS ANYTHING MORE HE COULD DO TO HELP THEN WE SHOULD LET HIM KNOW STRAIGHT AWAY.

2. I THOUGHT YOU WOULD WISH THE ABOVE PASSED ON IN CASE SECRETARY OF STATE SHOULD WISH TO THANK M. HERNU.

BT

TOP SECRET AND PERSONAL

575



Copy No. 3 of 4 copies



CABINET OFFICE

SECRET OFFICE

Mr Wright

Whitehall, London SW1A 2AS Telephone 01-233 8319

Attention: Sir Robert Armstrong KCB, CVO

30th April 1982

~~PL~~ ~~AM~~ 1/5

With the compliments of
Sir Robert Armstrong KCB, CVO
Secretary of the Cabinet

Sir Antony Acland, KCVO, CMG

70 Whitehall, London SW1A 2AS
Telephone: 01-233 8319

... came to see me this evening, following a
Michael Palliser, who was also present.

... he was not prepared to say who, but he did say
... ernment - had recently spoken to him in terms
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... He hoped that as a result of what he had said
... ow be aware of the extreme sensitivity of this
... great damage that could result from these

... contacts becoming known. The person concerned might well report this
... conversation back to his own source. The source was believed to be in the
... Ministry of Defence.

The President of the French Republic has, as you know, been
extremely supportive and co-operative in relation to the Falkland Islands
crisis, not only in this but also in other ways. It would be a serious matter
if indiscretion on these contacts were to cause him political embarrassment
and put his co-operation and good will at risk.

No doubt you will take whatever steps are open to you to ensure that
the strictest secrecy is observed in these matters.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Antony Acland.

Yours ever
Robert

Sir Frank Cooper, GCB, CMG

TOP SECRET AND PERSONAL
UK EYES A



575

CABINET OFFICE

70 Whitehall, London SW1A 2AS Telephone 01-233 8319

Mr Wright

From the Secretary of the Cabinet: Sir Robert Armstrong KCB, CVO

Ref: A08295

30th April 1982

~~Paul~~ ~~Tom~~ 1/5

My dear Frank,

The French Ambassador came to see me this evening, following a telephone conversation with Michael Palliser, who was also present.

What do we know of this.

He said that someone - he was not prepared to say who, but he did say that it was not anybody in Government - had recently spoken to him in terms which made it clear that he was aware of the recent contacts with the French military authorities about the performance of the French aircraft operated by the Argentine Air Force. He hoped that as a result of what he had said the person concerned would now be aware of the extreme sensitivity of this information, and of the very great damage that could result from these contacts becoming known. The person concerned might well report this conversation back to his own source. The source was believed to be in the Ministry of Defence.

The President of the French Republic has, as you know, been extremely supportive and co-operative in relation to the Falkland Islands crisis, not only in this but also in other ways. It would be a serious matter if indiscretion on these contacts were to cause him political embarrassment and put his co-operation and good will at risk.

No doubt you will take whatever steps are open to you to ensure that the strictest secrecy is observed in these matters.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Antony Acland.

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Sir Frank Cooper, GCB, CMG