

SECRET

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ZPA041 12/1115 132E1947 SPECIAL HANDLING

FOR ZPA

ROUTINE 120815Z MAY 82

FROM COMMCEN FCO LONDON  
TO MODUK  
CINCFLEET

SECRET UKEYES BRAVO UK COMMS ONLY  
SIC AAA/A2G/A3A/A2N/A2P/19F/UZJ  
SECRET UK EYES BRAVO  
FM BRITDEFAT PARIS  
DTG 120815Z MAY 82  
TO ROUTINE MODUK  
SIC AAA/A2G/A2P/U2J

Partly overtaken by your letter to HERNU but a public disavowal of the Article 127074 would still be helpful.

U.K.COMMS ONLY

SECRET

seen by 875

UK EYES B

FOR PS/SECRETARY OF STATE, INFO PSO/CDS.  
SUBJECT SUNDAY TIMES ARTICLE ON ANGLO/FRENCH COOPERATION OVER FALKLANDS CRISIS.

1. AT THE END OF MY VISIT TO M HERNU'S CABINET YESTERDAY, THE DIRECTOR, BERNARD, ASKED TO SEE ME. HE STARTED BY EMPHASISING HOW SOLIDLY FRANCE WAS BEHIND BRITAIN IN THIS CRISIS AND THAT M HERNU PERSONALLY WAS TAKING A GREAT INTEREST IN EVENTS AND INSISTING ON THE HIGHEST DEGREE OF COOPERATION TO MEET OUR REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION. HE ADDED THAT M HERNU HAD EMPHASISED THIS SOLIDARITY AT A SPEECH TO FORMER RESISTANCE MEMBERS THIS WEEKEND. M BERNARD THEN ADDED THAT HE HAD READ THE SUNDAY TIMES ARTICLE OF 9 MAY AND ASKED THE DIRECT QUESTION, WERE MY AUTHORITIES SATISFIED WITH THE DEGREE OF COOPERATION BEING OFFERED BY THE FRENCH MINISTRY OF DEFENCE AND THE DGA? I TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS REGRET FOR THE ARTICLE AND, FOLLOWING THE AGREED LINE (PARIS TELNO 451), TO SAY THAT IT WAS BOTH UNTRUE AND SPECULATIVE AND WE PROPOSED TO IGNORE IT AS YET ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF IRRESPONSIBLE JOURNALISM OVER WHICH WE LACKED POSITIVE CONTROL. M BERNARD WAS QUITE RELAXED AND SAID OF COURSE THEY HAD THE SAME PROBLEM IN FRANCE. HOWEVER, IT OCCURRED TO ME THAT IN ADDITION TO PROBING OUR OFFICIAL REACTION TO THE ARTICLE HE WAS ALSO SEEKING TO FIND OUT WHETHER THERE WAS ANY TRUTH IN IT AND WHETHER PERHAPS WE COULD HAVE INSPIRED IT.

2. THUS, YOU MAY WISH TO BRIEF SECRETARY OF STATE AND CDS THAT, ON AN OPPORTUNITY BASIS, IT MIGHT BE WORTH RAISING THE SUBJECT OF THE ARTICLE IN ORDER TO REASSURE THE FRENCH THAT THERE WAS NO TRUTH IN IT AND THAT WE ARE SATISFIED WITH THE LEVEL OF COOPERATION (IF INDEED WE ARE).

BT

U.K.COMMS ONLY

UK EYES B

SECRET

SECRET

Ps/S or S ✓

CDS (PSO)

cossec

pus

DSC (Row)

NNNN

(NO MODUK SIC UZJ)

PARAGRAPH NOT REQUIRED

NO REISSUING ONLY ON REQUEST