



PS/Secretary of State

Copy to:  
PS/PUS  
ACDS(Ops)  
AUS(D Staff)  
DCPR  
Hd of DS11

NON-COMBAT AIRCRAFT: CONTINGENCY PRESS RELEASE

1. In your minute of 11 May you asked for a draft contingency press release against the possibility of an Argentine non-combat aircraft being shot down by the Task Force for Secretary of State to clear with Lord Cockfield and circulate to members of OD(SA).
2. I attach a suggested draft which has been cleared with the Operations staff and with officials in both DOT and FCO.

*R J Harding*  
 R J HARDING  
 Head of DS8

12 May 82

## DRAFT PRESS RELEASE FOR ARGENTINE 707/C130 ENGAGEMENT

At [ ] time [ ] an Argentine (military) aircraft engaged on surveillance duties against our own forces was shot down by a (missile/aircraft). We have no reports of any survivors.

We warned the Argentine authorities on 23 April and again on 7 May that all Argentine aircraft, including civil aircraft, engaging in surveillance of British forces would be regarded as hostile and were liable to be dealt with accordingly.

The aircraft which was a (Boeing 707/C130) was (outside/inside) the TEZ and it was clear from its observed behaviour that it (intended to obtain/was engaged in acquiring) intelligence about our forces.

The intelligence gained from this type of surveillance operation can be used to direct air, surface ship and submarine attacks against our forces, with consequent risk to British lives.

The need for such action in our self-defence can easily be avoided if Argentina heeds our public warnings in future.

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SECRET



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MO 5/21

12th May 1982

*Dear John,*

NON-COMBAT AIRCRAFT : CONTINGENCY PRESS  
RELEASE

At OD(SA) yesterday it was agreed that Lord Cockfield should have the opportunity of commenting on the contingency press release against the possibility of an Argentine non-combat aircraft being shot down. I am attaching a draft which has been cleared at working level in both the DoT and FCO and I should be grateful if you would clear this line with the Trade Secretary.

I am copying this letter to John Coles (No 10), Brian Fall (FCO) and Roger Facer (Cabinet Office).

*Yours,*  
*Jane Ridley*  
(J E RIDLEY)

J Rhodes Esq

SECRET

*OK with amendments*

*SJS*  
*Are you content with this as a contingency line?*  
*SJS*

DRAFT PRESS RELEASE FOR ARGENTINE 707/C130 ENGAGEMENT

*military*

At time [ ] an Argentine ~~(military)~~ aircraft engaged on surveillance duties against our own forces was shot down by a (missile/aircraft). We have no reports of any survivors.

We warned the Argentine authorities on 23 April and again on 7 May that all Argentine aircraft, ~~[including civil aircraft]~~<sup>1</sup> engaging in surveillance of British forces would be regarded as hostile and were liable to be dealt with accordingly.

*which is a type of aircraft which we know the Argentines use for military purposes*

The aircraft which was a (Boeing 707/C130) was (outside/inside) the TEZ and it was clear from its observed behaviour that it (intended to obtain/was engaged in acquiring) intelligence about our forces. <sup>2</sup>

The intelligence gained from this type of surveillance operation can be used to direct air, surface ship and submarine attacks against our forces, with consequent risk to British lives.

The need for such action in our self-defence can easily be avoided if Argentina heeds our public warnings in future.

Notes

- ✓ 1. Lord Cockfield suggests that this be omitted - although it was in the announcement, he feels it could imply, wrongly, that the aircraft concerned was civil.
- ✓ 2. Amendment by Mr Tebbit
- ✓ 3. FCO suggest omission of this paragraph as too defensive.