

ENCL 100

1) KMM

2) file

cc. O'Sullivan

SECRET

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FOR CWI

IMMEDIATE 052300Z MAY 82

FROM COMMCEN FCO LONDON
TO MODUK
OINCFLEET

SECRET

SIC A3A/A2N/19F

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DESKBY 060800Z

FM WASHINGTON 052300Z MAY 82

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NO-1621 OF 5 MAY

M TELNO 1441: FALKLANDS: SATELLITE COVERAGE

1. BURT (STATE DEPARTMENT) TELEPHONED MINISTER THIS AFTERNOON TO INFORM US THAT THE ARGENTINIANS HAD AGAIN REQUESTED LANDSAT SATELLITE COVERAGE OF THE FALKLAND ISLANDS AREA. THE SPECIFIC REQUESTS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

AND 8 MAY - OPEN SEA AREAS,

- 11 MAY - FALKLAND ISLANDS

10 - 12 MAY - SOUTH GEORGIA.

THOMAS THANKED BURT FOR LETTING US KNOW THIS AND SAID HE PRESUMED THAT, NOW THAT THE U S GOVERNMENT HAD STATED ITS POSITION FIRMLY IN SUPPORT OF THE UK THERE WOULD BE NO QUESTION OF GRANTING THESE REQUESTS. BURT, IN SOME EMBARRASSMENT, SAID THAT ON THE CONTRARY, US POLICY ON ISSUE WAS THAT THE LANDSAT PROGRAMME WAS A CIVILIAN PROGRAMME WHICH OFFERED NO INTELLIGENCE OF MILITARY VALUE. IF THEY REFUSED A REQUEST ON THE GROUNDS WE WERE SUGGESTING, THIS COULD RISK PUTTING AN END TO THE WHOLE CIVILIAN SPACE PROGRAMME. NO COUNTRY WOULD THEN ALLOW SUCH PHOTOGRAPHY OVER THEIR TERRITORY.

2. THOMAS SAID THAT WE UNDERSTOOD THE POSITION THE AMERICANS WERE IN OVER THIS REQUEST. IT HAD BEEN EXPLAINED BY HAIG TO YOU ON 23 APRIL (NY TELEGRAM NO 1426). BUT FROM THE UK POINT OF VIEW THE OVERWHELMING PRIORITY WAS THE SAFETY OF OUR SHIPS. HE COULD NOT UNDERLINE STRONGLY ENOUGH THE INCOMPREHENSION AND RESENTMENT ON OUR PART IF THE ARGENTINES WERE GIVEN THIS INTELLIGENCE IN PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES. IT WOULD ALSO CONVEY AN IMPRESSION OF EASING OF PRESSURE ON THE ARGENTINE JUNTA AT EXACTLY THE WRONG MOMENT.

3. BURT SAID THAT ON THE LAST OCCASION WHEN THE ARGENTINES HAD REQUESTED THIS COVERAGE, PHOTOGRAPHS HAD NOT BEEN TAKEN BECAUSE OF 'TECHNICAL PROBLEMS!!'. HE DID NOT RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY THAT THIS MIGHT OCCUR AGAIN. THOMAS URGED VERY STRONGLY THAT IF IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE TO REFUSE THE REQUEST OUTHRIGHT, THE 'TECHNICAL PROBLEMS!!' SHOULD RECUR WITHOUT FAIL. BURT UNDERTOOK TO KEEP IN

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TOUCH ABOUT THIS.

4. SUBJECT TO CONFIRMATION THAT WE STILL REGARD THIS TYPE OF PHOTOGRAPHY AS OF POTENTIAL MILITARY VALUE TO THE ARGENTINES, WE WILL RETURN TO THE CHARGE TOMORROW AT A HIGHER LEVEL AT THE STATE DEPARTMENT AND UNDERLINE THE IMPORTANCE WE ATTACH TO NOT PASSING ON SATELLITE PHOTOGRAPHY OF THE AREA OF THE FALKLAND ISLANDS AT THIS JUNCTURE TO THE ARGENTINES.

HENDERSOM

BT

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