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FM SANTIAGO 211915Z JUL 82

TO IMMEDIATE F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 357 OF 21 JULY

INFO PRIORITY BRASILIA, MONTEVIDEO

INFO ROUTINE PORT STANLEY

YOUR TELNO 299 : AIR AND SEA LINKS

1. AT LEAST SIX CHILEAN AVIATION COMPANIES HAVE APPROACHED US WITH PROPOSALS FOR SETTING UP A REGULAR PUNTA ARENAS-STANLEY AIR LINK. HOWEVER, WE HAVE HEARD FROM LOCAL SUBSIDIARY OF BLUE CIRCLE CEMENT THAT THE MFA NOW CLAIM THAT THEY HAVE GIVEN AN UNDERTAKING TO THE UN (SIC) NOT TO ALLOW AIR LINKS WITH THE FALKLANDS FOR THE TIME BEING. THIS SOUNDS LIKE A PRETEXT, -BUT IN PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES THE CHILEAN GOVERNMENT WOULD PROBABLY TURN DOWN ANY REQUEST FOR AIR SERVICES, WHETHER OCCASIONAL CHARTERS OR SCHEDULED SERVICES. THEY WOULD BE MORE LIKELY TO AGREE TO PROVIDE ASSURANCES ON AVAILABILITY OF DIVERSIONARY AIRFIELDS IN EMERGENCIES.
2. SEA LINKS MIGHT BE RATHER LESS DIFFICULT. THE MV MONSUNEN USED TO PLY BETWEEN PUNTA ARENAS AND THE FALKLANDS. ADMIRAL MERINO, NAVAL C-IN-C AND MEMBER OF THE JUNTA, TOLD ME ON 2 JULY THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO SEE A REGULAR SERVICE PROVIDED BY A CHILEAN VESSEL IN DUE COURSE. SUBSEQUENT INDICATIONS ARE LESS ENCOURAGING BUT, PROVIDED CERTAIN PRECAUTIONS ARE TAKEN (SEE MY TELNO 346, NOT TO ALL), THE CHILEANS MIGHT TURN A BLIND EYE TO SAILINGS BY SHIPS OF A THIRD COUNTRY FLAG TO PORT STANLEY.
3. THE MFA ARE SHOWING EXTREME CAUTION ABOUT ANTAGONIZING ARGENTINA BY AGREEING TO COOPERATE VISIBLY WITH US IN RELATION TO THE FALKLANDS. THEY SAY THAT THEY WANT TO HELP BUT NEED REASSURANCE THAT ARGENTINA WOULD ACQUIESCE IN SUCH COOPERATION. IN FACT THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF FOREIGN POLICY TOLD ME THAT THEY MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO GO FURTHER THAN URUGUAY FOR THE TIME BEING. THEIR PARTICULAR CURRENT WORRY IS TO AVOID AN INCREASE IN TENSION OVER THE BEAGLE DISPUTE. THIS SUGGESTS THAT CHILEAN CAUTION IS LIKELY TO CONTINUE FOR THE REST OF THIS YEAR.

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4. IN GENERAL, THE CHILEAN GOVERNMENT IS LIKELY TO BECOME MORE RELAXED AS TIME PROGRESSES AND ARGENTINA'S TEMPERATURE COOLS : AND THE JUNTA ITSELF MAY BE LESS CAUTIOUS THAN THE MFA. HOWEVER, IF WE WISH TO PERSUADE CHILE TO AUTHORISE THESE LINKS, WE WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY HAVE TO OFFER SOMETHING SUBSTANTIAL IN EXCHANGE, EG PUBLIC SUPPORT TO AROUSE INTERNATIONAL CONCERN OVER THE BEAGLE ISSUE OR AN INDICATION THAT WE WILL STOP PRESSING OLD HUMAN RIGHTS CASES.

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TO PRIORITY FCO
TELEGRAM NUMBER 375 OF 4 AUGUST
INFO PRIORITY CIVIL COMMISSIONER PORT STANLEY

MS

YOUR TELNO 309 : AIRCRAFT FOR FALKLAND ISLANDS

1. I HAVE TAKEN SOUNDINGS FROM GENERAL MATTHEI VIA OUR CONTACT WITH GENERAL RODRIGUEZ AND RECEIVED A CAUTIOUS REPLY.
2. MATTHEI WOULD NOT WISH US TO LEASE ANY CHILEAN CIVIL AIRCRAFT FOR INTERNAL AIR SERVICES ON THE FALKLANDS, SINCE HE THOUGHT THIS WOULD PUT CHILE IN A DIFFICULT POSITION WITH ARGENTINA. NOR WAS HE AT ALL KEEN TO ALLOW US TO STAGE BRITISH-REGISTERED AIRCRAFT THROUGH CHILE TO THE FALKLANDS.

*Paragraph 3 deleted and retained
under Section 3(4).*

*M Wayland
27 April 2012*

4. THE CHILEAN AIR FORCE REACTION TO THIS REQUEST UNDERLINES THEIR SENSITIVITY OVER SUCH MATTERS. THEY ARE MOST ANXIOUS TO HELP BUT MUST USUALLY BE GIVEN AN ESCAPE ROUTE SO THAT THEY CAN DENY DIRECT INVOLVMENT SHOULD ANY CRITICISM BE DIRECTED AT THEM SUBSEQUENTLY. THIS ATTITUDE CONTRASTS SHARPLY WITH THAT OF THE CHILEAN NAVY REPORTED IN MY TELEGRAM NUMBER 373. THE REASON COULD BE SIMPLY THAT SHIPS ARE HARDER TO CONCEAL THAN AIRCRAFT, BUT WE ALSO KNOW FROM PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE THAT THE NAVY ARE APT TO OVERPLAY THEIR HAND.

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