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FM PARIS 281610Z JUL 82
TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELEGRAM NUMBER 778 OF 28 JULY 1982

MIPT. EXOCETS: FRENCH STATEMENT

BEGINS

QUOTE IN AN ARTICLE IN THE SUNDAY TIMES OF 25 JULY ASSERTIONS WERE MADE WHICH MIGHT DISTURB FRANCO-BRITISH COOPERATION. AN ENQUIRY WAS IMMEDIATELY ORDERED BY THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE. IT TRANSPIRES THAT:

I) THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT IMPOSED ON 7 APRIL AN EMBARGO ON ALL MILITARY EXPORTS TO ARGENTINA. NO DELIVERY OF MILITARY MATERIAL HAS BEEN MADE TO ARGENTINA SINCE THAT DATE. THE EMBARGO ALSO COVERED MILITARY TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE. THESE INSTRUCTIONS WERE CONVEYED TO ALL THE FIRMS INVOLVED.

II) THE TEAM OF TECHNICAL ADVISERS (SEE ANNEX) WHICH WAS PUT IN PLACE IN NOVEMBER 1981 UNDER THE TERMS OF THE SUPER ETENDARD SALES CONTRACT CONCLUDED IN 1979, CARRIED OUT ITS WORK NORMALLY UNTIL THE BEGINNING OF HOSTILITIES IN PARTICULAR IN RESPECT OF THE CHECKING OF CIRCUITS ON THE AIRCRAFT IN PREPARATION FOR THE ARRIVAL OF THE SNIAS TECHNICIANS, ARRANGED BEFORE THE FALKLANDS CONFLICT FOR 10 APRIL. THE SNIAS MISSION, WHICH WAS DUE NOT ONLY TO MOUNT THE AM39 MISSILES BUT ABOVE ALL TO ADJUST THEM AND COMPLETE THEIR FINAL PREPARATION, WAS CANCELLED ON 7 APRIL. THERE WERE THEREFORE NO FRENCH AM39 SPECIALISTS IN ARGENTINA.

III) THE FOUR OPERATIONAL SUPER ETENDARDS OF THE ARGENTINE NAVY LEFT THE BASE AT BAHIA BLANCA ON 19 AND 20 APRIL FOR SOUTHERN ARGENTINA SOME 2,000 KILOMETRES AWAY. IT WAS FROM SOUTHERN ARGENTINA THAT ARGENTINE AIR OPERATIONS WERE CONDUCTED AGAINST THE BRITISH FLEET WHICH ARRIVED IN THE AREA ON OR ABOUT 30 APRIL, THE DATE ON WHICH THE UK IMPOSED ITS AIR AND SEA TOTAL EXCLUSION ZONE. IN ACCORDANCE WITH THEIR INSTRUCTIONS NONE OF THE NINE FRENCH TECHNICIANS LEFT BAHIA BLANCO DURING THE HOSTILITIES. NO FRENCH TECHNICIAN WAS IN SOUTHERN ARGENTINA.

IV) THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT TOTALLY FULFILLED THE OBLIGATIONS IMPOSED ON IT BY ITS COMPLETE SOLIDARITY WITH ITS BRITISH ALLY. AMONGST THE TEN STATES OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY FRANCE WAS EXEMPLARY IN CARRYING OUT THE PROVISIONS IN FORCE FROM 7 APRIL THROUGHOUT THE VARIOUS DIPLOMATIC AND MILITARY PHASES OF THE CONFLICT.

/ THE FRENCH

THE FRENCH ATTITUDE WAS WITHOUT RESERVATION OR AFTERTHOUGHT. IT WOULD BE REGRETTABLE IF ERRONEOUS AND TENDENTIOUS PRESS ALLEGATIONS CONTRIBUTED TO SOWING DOUBTS AT A TIME WHEN THE UNITY OF EUROPE IS AN ABSOLUTE NECESSITY.

ANNEX

COMPOSITION OF THE SUPER ETENDARD TEAM SET UP FOR ONE YEAR IN NOVEMBER 1981

5 TECHNICIANS FROM MARCEL DASSAULT AIRCRAFT INCLUDING M. HERVE COLIN (NOT COLEN AS PRINTED BY THE SUNDAY TIMES)

1 TECHNICIAN FROM SNECMA

1 TECHNICIAN FROM THOMPSON-CSF (RADAR, HUD)

1 TECHNICIAN FROM ITEP (POWER SUPPLIES)

1 TECHNICIAN FROM SNIAS SPECIALISED IN AUTOMATIC GROUND TESTING EQUIPMENT FOR AIRCRAFT (ATEC) DESIGNED AND SUPPLIED BY THE QUOTE AIRCRAFT UNQUOTE DIVISION OF SNIAS, A STRUCTURE WHICH IS INDEPENDENT OF THE QUOTE TACTICAL MISSILES UNQUOTE DIVISION. THE SPECIALIST IN QUESTION HAS NO COMPETENCE IN THE FIELD OF TACTICAL MISSILES UNQUOTE
ENDS

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FM PARIS 281310Z JUL 82
TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELEGRAM NUMBER 777 OF 28 JULY 1982

MY TELNO 774: ALLEGATIONS OF FRENCH HELP FOR ARGENTINA OVER EXOCETS

1. THE FRENCH MINISTRIES OF DEFENCE AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS ISSUED LAST NIGHT (27 JULY) A JOINT STATEMENT (TRANSLATION IN MIFT). THE QUAI SENT US THE STATEMENT THIS MORNING UNDER COVER OF A NOTE SIMPLY TRANSMITTING THE TEXT.

2. GUTMAN TOLD ME LAST NIGHT THAT THE FRENCH WERE STILL PURSUING THEIR ENQUIRIES WITH FIRMS CONCERNED AND ALTHOUGH HE REFERRED TO A STATEMENT WHICH HAD BEEN IN PREPERATION FOR THE PREVIOUS DAY AND A HALF, CLEARLY WAS UNAWARE THAT IT ISSUED IN FACT JUST BEFORE I SAW HIM. WE THEREFORE ASKED THE QUAI THIS MORNING WHETHER THE STATEMENT WAS DIFINITIVE AND WHETHER IT MEANT THAT ENQUIRIES WERE COMPLETE. THE QUAI REFERRED US TO THE MINISTRY F DEFENCE AND SAID THAT GUTMANN WAS ANGRY THAT HE HAD NOT BEEN TOLD THAT THE STATEMENT HAD ISSUED. THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (HEISBOURG IN HERNU'S CABINET) DID NOT REPLY DIRECTLY TO THE QUESTION WHETHER ENQUIRIES WERE NOW COMPLETE BUT SAID THAT THE FRENCH WERE "ON THE WATCH" FOR POSSIBLE FURTHER INFORMATION. HEISBOURG THOUGHT IT UNLIKELY THAT THERE WOULD BE A FURTHER STATEMENT.

3. IT LOOKS THEREFORE AS THOUGH THE FRENCH HAVE NOT YET EXHAUSTED ALL THEIR LINES OF ENQUIRY BUT ARE HOPING THAT THE STATEMENT WILL SUFFICE TO DAMP DOWN THE AFFAIR.

4. A MEMBER OF LEMOINE'S CABINET (LEMOINE IS SECRETARY OF STATE AT THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE AS HERNU'S DEPUTY) TOLD US YESTERDAY THAT THE FRENCH SUSPECTED THAT THE SUNDAY TIMES WAS BEING MANIPULATED IN ORDER TO CAUSE FRICTION BETWEEN FRANCE AND BRITAIN AT A TIME WHEN EUROPE WAS STANDING UP TO THE US. THERE IS AN ALLUSION TO THIS IN THE LAST SENTENCE OF THE STATEMENT.

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/ 5. A DASSAULT

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5. A DASSAULT SPOKESMAN IS QUOTED BY AGENCE PRESSE AS SAYING THAT THE BRITISH UNDERESTIMATED THE ARGENTINES, WHO HAD ENGINEERS PERFECTLY COMPETENT TO FIT AM39S TO THE SUPER ETENDARDS. THE SPOKESMAN ALSO SAID THAT THE FRENCH TECHNICIANS STAYED IN BUENOS AIRES PROVINCE THROUGHOUT THE CONFLICT AND COULD NOT HAVE WORKED ON THE SUPER ETENDARDS, WHICH WERE BASED IN PATAGONIA.

6. THE PRO-GOVERNMENT LE MATIN QUOTES GOVERNMENT SOURCES AS CONFIRMING THAT SUPER ETENDARDS AND MIRAGE 111 MADE SIMULATED ATTACKS ON THE BRITISH FLEET.

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~~MR. HANWAY~~
SIR I SINCLAIR
~~MR. DONALD~~
MR WRIGHT
~~MR. WHITE~~
LORD BRIDGES
MR URE
~~MR. WHITE~~

PS/NO 10 DOWNING ST (2)
PS/S OF S FOR DEFENCE
MR J STEWART AUSD STAFF MOD
PS/CHANCELLOR)
MR ILETT) TREASURY
MR LITTLER)
MISS DICKSON D/ENERGY
SIR R ARMSTRONG)
SIR M PALLISER)
MR A D S GOODALL) CABINET OFFICE
DIO)

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ROOM 8 FOR MODUK C IN C FLEET

Mr. COLIN ROTH, LACPD, ODA
Mr. BORDEN, LACPD, ODA

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DESKBY 261300Z

FM PARIS 261200Z JUL 82
TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELEGRAM NUMBER 766 OF 26 JULY 1982

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EXOCET: SUNDAY TIMES ALLEGATIONS

1. THE FRENCH MINISTRY OF DEFENCE ISSUED LAST NIGHT (25 JULY) THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT ON THE SUNDAY TIMES STORY:

"THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE RECALLS THAT AS SOON AS THE ARGENTINES INVADED THE FALKLANDS THE GOVERNMENT SUSPENDED ALL AUTHORISATION FOR SALES MISSIONS AND THE NEGOTIATION, SALE AND EXPORT OF WAR MATERIAL OR RELATED MATERIAL TO ARGENTINA. THIS TOTAL EMBARGO WAS FULLY RESPECTED AND NO DELIVERY OF WAR MATERIAL HAS BEEN MADE TO THIS COUNTRY SINCE THE BEGINNING OF HOSTILITIES.

IN ADDITION CHARLES HERNU, THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE, IN FULL AGREEMENT WITH CLAUDE CHEYSSON, THE MINISTER FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS, GAVE INSTRUCTIONS THAT NO TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE OF A MILITARY NATURE SHOULD BE GIVEN TO ARGENTINA AND IN PARTICULAR THAT NO WORK SHOULD

SHOULD BE GIVEN TO ARGENTINA, AND IN PARTICULAR THAT NO WORK SHOULD BE DONE ON MATERIAL USED IN UNITS OPERATING IN THE DIRECTION OF THE FALKLANDS.

THE GOVERNMENT THEREFORE FEELS THAT IT HAS ENTIRELY FULFILLED ITS OBLIGATIONS DERIVING FROM ITS COMPLETE SOLIDARITY WITH OUR BRITISH FRIENDS.

AN ENQUIRY IS UNDER WAY TO SEE WHETHER THE ABOVE INSTRUCTIONS WERE RESPECTED."

2. THE SUNDAY TIMES ARTICLE HAS AROUSED CONSIDERABLE INTEREST IN THE FRENCH PRESS WITH MOST PAPERS REPORTING FACTUALLY AND IN A NEUTRAL TONE THE ALLEGATIONS AND THE FRENCH MOD'S STATEMENT. THE EDITORIAL IN THIS MORNING'S MATIN (PRO-GOVERNMENT) SAYS THAT WHETHER THE ALLEGATIONS ARE TRUE OR NOT THE EPISODE ILLUSTRATES THE PROBLEMS THAT CAN ARISE WHEN A COUNTRY BECOMES ONE OF THE WORLD'S LEADING ARMS SUPPLIERS.

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LINE TO TAKE (IF RAISED)

I have noted the 'Sunday Times' article and we have discussed it with the French Government. It is clear that these allegations, if confirmed, would point to a clear breach of French Government policy and the French have already set up an urgent enquiry into them. It would be wrong for me to comment further at this stage.

mt

NOTES FOR SUPPLEMENTARIES

WHAT CONTACTS HAVE YOU HAD WITH THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT ON EXOCETS?

1. We have been in close and frequent contact with the French Government over Argentine acquisition of Exocet missiles. The content of those contacts must remain confidential.

HAVE THE FRENCH BEEN COOPERATIVE?

2. I cannot go into detail about exchanges that must remain confidential, but the French Government gave firm and most welcome support to us throughout the conflict.

DO YOU BELIEVE IN THE SINCERITY OF THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT'S STATEMENT?

3. Yes. The French Government have been very explicit and prompt in their statements. We naturally look forward to the results of their current enquiry.

WHAT IF THE STORY IS TRUE?

4. I believe the French Government would deplore that as much as I would, but they are looking into this in detail themselves.

DO YOU HAVE ANY EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE ALLEGATIONS?

5. I have nothing to add to my earlier reply.

FRENCH SUPER ETENDARDS IN EXERCISES WITH HARRIERS?

6. Our forces naturally maintain close contacts with their French opposite numbers, and joint training takes place regularly. But it is not our practice to give details.

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FM PARIS 301400Z JUL 82

TO PRIORITY FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 782 OF 30 JULY 1982

INFO ROUTINE MODUK

*Read in file.
mt*

MY TEL NO 777: ALLEGATIONS OF FRENCH HELP FOR ARGENTINA OVER EXOCETS

1. WHEN A MEMBER OF CHANCERY CALLED ON HEISBOURG, THE DIPLOMATIC ADVISER TO THE FRENCH MINISTER OF DEFENCE, ON ANOTHER SUBJECT ON 29 JULY, HEISBOURG RAISED THE SUBJECT OF THE SUNDAY TIMES ARTICLES. HE SAID HIS MINISTER HAD NOTED WITH SURPRISE THE RECENT STATEMENT BY MR PATTIE ABOUT FRENCH ASSISTANCE TO THE ROYAL AIR FORCE DURING THE FALKLANDS CRISIS. HERNU DID NOT INTEND TO MAKE OFFICIAL REPRESENTATIONS ABOUT THIS. BUT IT WAS NONETHELESS REGRETTABLE THAT SUCH A CONFIDENTIAL ISSUE HAD BEEN MENTIONED PUBLICLY. ADMITTEDLY THERE HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN LEAKS IN THE FRENCH PRESS (ALTHOUGH HE WISHED TO NOTE IN PASSING THAT DJMOULIN OF L'EXPRESS, THE FIRST AUTHOR OF A STORY ON THIS SUBJECT, PRIVATELY CLAIMED TO HAVE RECEIVED THIS INFORMATION FROM THE BRITISH MINISTRY OF DEFENCE). BUT SUCH REPORTS WERE GIVEN GREATER AUTHORITY WHEN EXPRESSED BY A MINISTER.

2. HEISBOURG SAID THAT HE HOPED THE SUNDAY TIMES AFFAIR WAS NOW CLOSED. THE FRENCH ENQUIRY WAS EFFECTIVELY COMPLETED, ALTHOUGH THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT WOULD OF COURSE BE ON THE LOOK-OUT FOR ANY FURTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION. THE PRESIDENT OF DASSAULT, THE DIRECTOR FOR INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, AND M COLIN HIMSELF HAD ALL BEEN GRILLED. (COLIN MIGHT BE ON HOLIDAY AS FAR AS THE PRESS WERE CONCERNED, BUT THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT HAD FOUND HIM AND QUESTIONED HIM AT LENGTH.) HEISBOURG HIMSELF HAD NOT BEEN CONVINCED WHEN THE ENQUIRY BEGUN THAT DASSAULT HAD NOT BEEN UP TO SOME DIRTY BUSINESS. NOW HE WAS. HEISBOURG SAID HE FEARED THAT THINGS WOULD GET VERY MURKY IF THE SUNDAY TIMES PERSISTED IN FOLLOWING UP THE ISABEL HILTON STORY. EVEN THOUGH THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT WISHED TO TURN A PAGE ON THE EPISODE, FRENCH INDUSTRIALISTS HAD HAD AS MUCH AS THEY COULD TAKE. THEY FELT THEY HAD BEEN UNJUSTLY ACCUSED. MOREOVER THEY BELIEVED THAT THEY WERE IN POSSESSION OF ITEMS OF INFORMATION WHICH, IF KNOWN, WOULD DEFLECT THE BLAME ELSEWHERE. THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT HAD NO IDEA WHETHER THIS INFORMATION WAS CORRECT OR NOT. BUT FRENCH INDUSTRIALISTS WERE ALLEGING PRIVATELY THAT:

(1) DURING THE FALKLANDS CONFLICT AN ITALIAN FIRM MANUFACTURING UNDER LICENCE FROM A BRITISH COMPANY (? BAKER) HAD BEEN SUPPLYING SPARE PARTS FOR THE EJECTOR SEATS OF ARGENTINE MIRAGES:

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(II) A TEAM FROM ROLLS ROYCE HAD ALREADY RETURNED TO ARGENTINA TO DISCUSS SALES OF MILITARY AERO-ENGINES;

(III) THE ARGENTINE MILITARY PURCHASING MISSION DISPLACED FROM LONDON HAD SET UP BUSINESS IN HAMBURG AND WAS IN THE THICK OF NEGOTIATIONS WITH GERMAN ARMS COMPANIES.

*Not
Correct / think
nt*

IF DASSAULT CONTINUED TO BE PUT ON THE SPOT, THEIR EXECUTIVES WOULD BE STRONGLY TEMPTED TO LEAK THESE ALLEGATIONS TO THE PRESS.

3. AT MY REQUEST THE HEAD OF CHANCERY SUBSEQUENTLY REGISTERED TWO POINTS WITH HEISBOURG. FIRST, MR PATTIE'S OBJECTIVE HAD BEEN TO PAY TRIBUTE TO THE FRENCH FOR THE HELP THEY HAD AFFORDED AND THEREBY TO SET THE RECORD STRAIGHT IN THE FACE OF PRESS ALLEGATIONS LIKE THOSE IN THE SUNDAY TIMES. HEISBOURG ACCEPTED THIS BUT COMMENTED THAT THE FRENCH PREFERRED THE FORMULATION USED BY MR NOTT ON 27 JULY. HIS STATEMENT HAD BEEN MUCH APPRECIATED. SECOND, ARBUTHNOTT SAID THAT NEITHER OF THE TWO GOVERNMENTS COULD CONTROL THE PRESS. IF THERE WERE FURTHER STORIES IN THE SUNDAY TIMES, WE HOPED THAT, IN THE SPIRIT OF THEIR COMMUNIQUE (MY TELNO 778), THE FRENCH WOULD CONTINUE TO TRY TO DAMP DOWN REACTION. THERE SEEMED NO NEED FOR DASSAULT ITSELF TO CREATE NEW STORIES WHEN COMMENTING ON THOSE WHICH APPEARED IN THE PRESS. HEISBOURG SAID THAT THE FRENCH WOULD CONTINUE TO ASK DASSAULT TO COOL IT. NEVERTHELESS, THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE BITTERNESS IN THE FRENCH ARMS INDUSTRY ABOUT WHAT WAS SEEN AS SHABBY TREATMENT BY THE BRITISH PRESS AFTER ALL THE EFFORTS THE FRENCH HAD MADE.

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