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FALKLANDS; ARGENTINE REQUEST FOR SATELLITE COVERAGE OF FALKLAND ISLANDS.

1. BURT (STATE DEPARTMENT) ACCOMPANIED BY BLACKWILL, TOLD MINISTER THIS EVENING THAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAD RECEIVED A REQUEST FROM NASA FOR GUIDANCE ON THE ARGENTINE REQUEST FOR LANDSAT PHOTOGRAPHIC SERVICE TO COVER THE FALKLAND ISLANDS. THE ARGENTINIANS HAVE ASKED FOR THREE PASSES OVER THE FALKLANDS ON 21, 22, AND 23 APRIL. THE STATE DEPARTMENT UNDERSTAND THAT THIS WOULD PROVIDE THREE SEPARATE PHOTOGRAPHS GIVING COVERAGE OF THE FALKLAND ISLANDS THEMSELVES WITH A FEW MILES OF SURROUNDING SEA AREA. NASA SAID THAT THIS WAS A ROUTINE REQUEST AND THAT SINCE ARGENTINA WAS A SUBSCRIBER TO THE LANDSAT PROGRAMME THEY FELT THEY HAD NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO MEET IT. TO DO SO, NASA NEEDED TO PROGRAMME THE SATELLITE TODAY. THE INFORMATION WOULD BECOME AVAILABLE WITHIN FOUR OR FIVE DAYS OF THE PASSES.

2. ACCORDING TO BURT, LANDSAT IS A CIVIL SATELLITE WHICH PROVIDES VERY LOW RESOLUTION PHOTOGRAPHY (80 METRES). IT WAS DESIGNED TO PROVIDE NO INFORMATION OF MILITARY VALUE AND IS INTENDED FOR AGRICULTURAL PURPOSES AND FOR MINERAL EXPLORATION. IN THE U.S. VIEW THE RESOLUTION IS TOO LOW TO PROVIDE ANY EVIDENCE OF MILITARY INSTALLATIONS OR SHIPS. THE STATE DEPARTMENT UNDERSTANDS THAT IT HAS NO MORE THAN "NEAR INFRA-RED CAPACITY" (MULTI SPECTRAL) AND IS INCAPABLE OF PICKING UP A HOT SOURCE. BURT ADDED THAT THERE IS A LANDSAT GROUND STATION IN ARGENTINA WHICH CAN BE USED AS A DOWN LINK. BUT THE ARGENTINIANS COULD NOT DECRYPT THE PRODUCT UNTIL THEY ARE GIVEN THE APPROPRIATE CODE.

3. BURT HAD BEEN INSTRUCTED TO SAY THAT CAREFUL CONSIDERATION HAD BEEN GIVEN TO NASA'S REQUEST FOR GUIDANCE. TAKING ALL THE CIRCUMSTANCES INTO ACCOUNT, INCLUDING PARTICULARLY THE DELAY BEFORE ANY INFORMATION BECAME AVAILABLE, HOWEVER LITTLE ITS VALUE IN MILITARY TERMS, THE ADMINISTRATION DID NOT FEEL ABLE TO PREVENT NASA FROM FULFILING ITS OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE TERMS OF THE LANDSAT PROGRAMME TO ONE OF ITS SUBSCRIBERS.

4. THOMAS SAID THAT THIS WOULD CAUSE THE GRAVEST CONCERN IN LONDON. IT WAS INCONCEIVABLE THAT AN ARGENTINIAN REQUEST IN PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES FOR SATELLITE PHOTOGRAPHY OF THE FALKLAND ISLANDS WAS, IN THEIR OWN VIEW, WITHOUT MILITARY SIGNIFICANCE. IT WOULD HAVE BEEN VERY MUCH BETTER TO DISSUADE NASA FROM GOING

AHEAD. THIS WOULD HAVE SENT A SIGNAL OF DISAPPROVAL FOR WHAT THE ARGENTINIANS HAD DONE. BURT REPLIED THAT AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF HAIG'S STATEMENT YESTERDAY AND HIS DEPARTURE FOR BUENOS AIRES THIS MORNING, THE COURSE THOMAS WAS SUGGESTING WOULD HAVE BEEN POLITICALLY IMPOSSIBLE. THE ARGENTINIAN REQUEST WAS CLEARLY WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF NORMAL COOPERATIVE ARRANGEMENTS. THOMAS SUGGESTED THAT IT SHOULD BE POSSIBLE TO FUDGE THE PRODUCT OR TO ENSURE THAT SOMETHING WENT WRONG WITH ITS TRANSMISSION TO THE ARGENTINIANS. HE SAID THAT IN ANY CASE HE HOPED WE COULD ASSUME THAT IF THE EFFORTS TO GET ARGENTINIANS TO WITHDRAW THEIR TROOPS PEACEFULLY FAILED, THIS DECISION WOULD BE RE-EXAMINED. BURT SAID WE COULD CERTAINLY ASSUME THIS. BUT SO MUCH WOULD BY THEN HAVE CHANGED THAT REFUSING TO PROVIDE THE ARGENTINIANS WITH THE LANDSAT SERVICE WOULD SEEM A VERY MINOR MATTER.

5. SINCE HEARING OF THE ABOVE I HAVE SPOKEN TO EAGLEBURGER 'YOU ARE OVER-DOING THE NEUTRALITY', I SAID, 'YOU WILL BE PROVIDING ARGENTINA WITH USEFUL MATERIAL SUCH AS SHIPS MOVEMENTS WHEN YOU OUGHT TO BE SENDING THEM SIGNALS TO SHOW WHICH SIDE YOU WILL BE ON IF THEY ARE INTRANSIGENT'.

6. EAGLEBURGER SAID THAT THE SATELLITE WOULD NOT FURNISH INFORMATION OF ANY MILITARY VALUE. BUT ARGENTINA THOUGHT IT WOULD.

7. I SAID THAT ARGENTINA WOULD AT LEAST DERIVE COMFORT FROM AN AMERICAN DECISION NOW TO PROVIDE INFORMATION THAT THEY CONSIDERED OF VALUE. THIS WOULD BE A FILLIP AND ENCOURAGE THEM IN THE VIEW THAT THE USA WERE GOING TO STAY NEUTRAL. WE WOULD NEVER GET A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT ON THAT BASIS.

8. EAGLEBURGER SAID THAT THEY WERE BOUND UNDER TREATY TO MAKE THE SATELLITE AVAILABLE FOR ARGENTINA. I SUGGESTED THAT THEY COULD SAY IT HAD A TECHNICAL DEFECT.

9. EAGLEBURGER UNDERTOOK TO DELAY A DECISION AND TO COMMUNICATE WITH ME TOMORROW BEFORE PROCEEDING.

HENDERSON

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