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DEYOU

SECRET AND PERSONAL

FM WASHINGTON 031645Z MAY 82
TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELEGRAM NO 1572 OF 3 MAY

FOLLOWING FOR PRIVATE SECRETARY

FALKLANDS

1. IN THE FEW MINUTES I HAD WITH WEINBERGER WHILE THE SECRETARY OF STATE WAS CALLED AWAY TO TALK TO HAIG HE SPOKE TO ME OF HIS EAGERNESS TO GIVE US MAXIMUM SUPPORT. HE WAS REALLY WAITING TO HEAR WHETHER HE COULD HELP BY SENDING DOWN A CARRIER. IT WOULD TAKE 15 DAYS FOR IT TO GET TO THE SOUTH ATLANTIC. HE HAD THE EISENHOWER MARKED FOR THE TASK. IT WAS NOW JUST OFF GIBRALTAR. WHAT HE WAS THINKING WAS THAT IT MIGHT SERVE AS A MOBILE RUNWAY FOR US. THIS WOULD NOT MEAN THAT THE US FORCES WERE GOING TO BE ENGAGED AGAINST THE ARGENTINIANS. I SAID THAT I SUPPOSED US RECONNAISSANCE PLANES COULD FLY OFF THE CARRIER AND PROVIDE INFORMATION FOR US. AS REGARDS OUR OWN LANDING REQUIREMENTS I WAS SURE IT COULD BE OF GREAT IMPORTANCE TO HAVE AS IT WERE A MOBILE LANDING STRIP. HOW WOULD HE VIEW THE IDEA OF BUCCANEERS USING THE CARRIER, MANNED OF COURSE BY THE RAF? WEINBERGER SEEMED TO HAVE NO TROUBLE WITH THIS IDEA.

2 I THINK WEINBERGER SPOKE IN SIMILAR SORT OF TERMS TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE. HE HAD EXPRESSED HIS EAGERNESS TO PROVIDE SUPPORT. REGARDING THE POSSIBLE TROUBLE WE MIGHT HAVE OVER AIR COVER HE HAD BEEN THINKING WHICH CARRIER MIGHT BE MADE AVAILABLE. WE WILL HAVE TO THINK VERY CAREFULLY HOW BEST TO FOLLOW THIS UP, IF WE WISH TO DO SO. AS YOU SUGGESTED IT DOES HAVE A BEARING UPON THE IDEA THAT WE SHOULD PRESSURISE THE AMERICANS AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL TO GET THEM TO CUT OFF IMPORTS TO ARGENTINA. FOR THEM TO MAKE A CARRIER AVAILABLE AS A RUNWAY WOULD BE FAR MORE EFFECTIVE THAN ANYTHING THEY COULD DO IN THE REALM OF IMPORTS.

HENDERSON

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