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House of Commons Defence Committee.

PARLIAMENT

Falklands Inquiry

June 1982

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PREM 19/1883

CONFIDENTIAL

SKW

16 July 1986

Thank you for your letter of 14 July about the academic studies commissioned by the Ministry of Defence into aspects of relations between Government and the media in wartime.

The Prime Minister has noted the course which your Secretary of State intends to follow on the publication of these studies.

(TIM FLESHER)

David Woodhead, Esq.,
Ministry of Defence.

CONFIDENTIAL

SKW



MO 9/10E

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1

Telephone 01-~~836 7622~~ 218 6169

14th July 1986

John Tim

ms

*Prime Minister
to note
CDD 15/7.*

The Prime Minister may recall that in late 1982, following the Falklands conflict, the Ministry of Defence commissioned two academic studies into aspects of relations between Government and the media in wartime. The studies were undertaken by King's College, London and the Centre for Journalism Studies at University College, Cardiff. Now that final versions of both studies are available the Defence Secretary proposes to place copies in the libraries of both Houses of Parliament before the recess. The Prime Minister may, however, wish to be aware of the background before this is done.

The study by King's College, London concerned 'Unofficial commentary in the media on military aspects of the Falklands campaign 1982'. Though short, it is an important piece of work and is uncontentious. The study commissioned from University College, Cardiff on 'Relations between Governments, Armed Services and the media in times of armed conflict' runs to 250,000 words in two volumes, one on the British experience (Suez and the Falklands), the other on Vietnam, the Israeli occupation of Lebanon, and Grenada. The second volume is based entirely on published sources, but the Falklands section draws heavily on officially-sponsored interviews with those involved in the campaign, including serving and past Ministers, members of the Armed Forces and civil servants. Some of the comments and conclusions of the study are contentious. The study also contains detailed recommendations on how relations with the media could be improved in a future conflict. These are being considered and, where appropriate, acted upon by officials in parallel with follow-up work to the Beach Report on Censorship.

It was envisaged from the outset that both studies would be published by the authors. Difficulties have, however, arisen with the authors of the Cardiff study, who have been reluctant to delete from their report certain items of information which, though classified, they do not consider to be of real security sensitivity. They are particularly unhappy with our insistence

Tim Flesher Esq
No 10 Downing Street



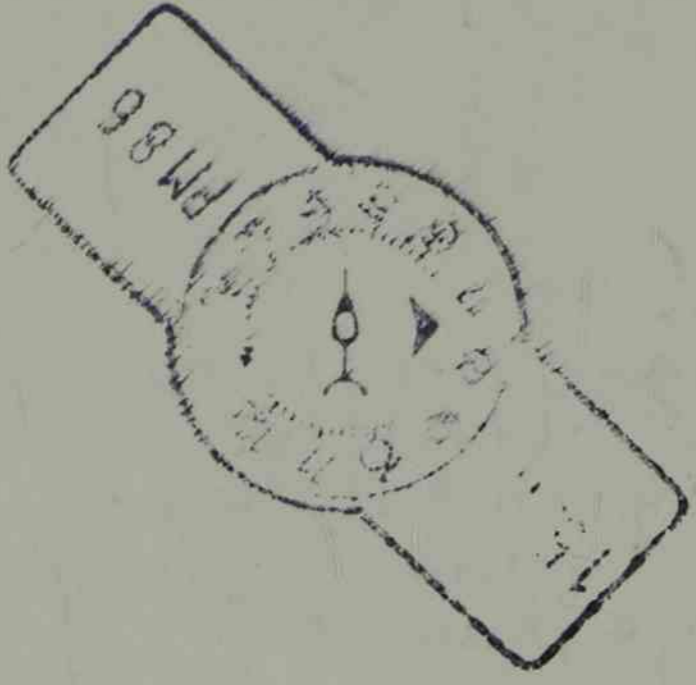
on the removal of references to Cabinet committees. In addition, one of the authors, Mr Mercer, a freelance journalist, leaked to "The Observer" in May in the existence of classified but now obsolete understandings with the BBC. Although this was a prima facie breach of the Official Secrets Act, the Law Officers decided in the event that no legal action should be taken.

Discussions are still continuing with the authors of the Cardiff study on the amendments to their proposed book, which they hope to publish late this year or early next. As to the copies of the study that we shall present to Parliament, the authors have accepted that these are entirely a matter for us, and have taken our amendments in full. Given that the study was completed a year ago and has already attracted Parliamentary interest, Mr Younger believes it important that it, together with the King's study, should be placed in the libraries as soon as possible. He will be announcing this by means of a written Parliamentary Answer and will at the same time pass a copy to the Chairman of the Defence Select Committee.

I am copying this letter to Colin Budd (FCO), Claire Pelham (Home Office) and Alison Smith (Lord Privy Seal's Office).

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'D J Woodhead'.

(D J WOODHEAD)





10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

8 February 1983

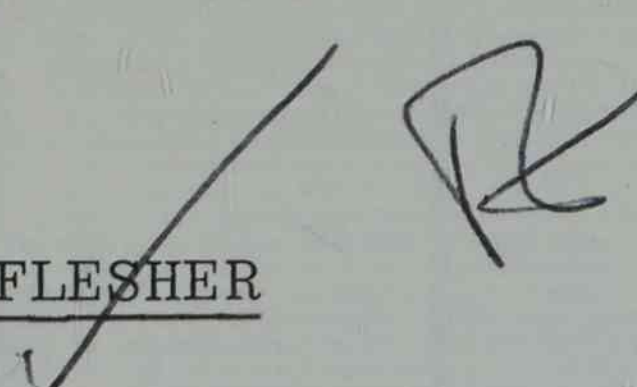
Thank you for your letter of 3 February enclosing a copy of the draft of the Government Observations on the Defence Select Committee's Report. The Prime Minister has noted both the draft and the arrangements which your Secretary of State proposes to make for its publication. I understand that Mr. Ingham will be in touch with you to suggest a number of textual amendments.

I am sending a copy of this letter to David Heyhoe (Lord President's Office) and Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

Timothy Flesher

Miss Jane Ridley,
Ministry of Defence.

ls


MR FLESHER

Falklands papers:
MoD draft to Sir W

17

REPLY TO DEFENCE COMMITTEE

The draft reply sent by MoD is a succinct if somewhat bureaucratic reply to the Defence Committee's report. I doubt whether it is worth the effort to achieve a less stilted style.

My substantive comments are as follows:

On page 2: I think we should distance ourselves a bit further from misinformation and redraft the first sentence of page 2 to read:

"Such a policy may have short term attractions, but would inevitably"

On Page 2: I would like to strengthen the last sentence of para. 3 to read:

"It will continue to regard the latter as quite separate, acceptable and necessary when justified by operational requirements."

On page 4: We need to answer the point in the very last (XXViii) conclusion of the Defence Committee in its Summary about competition between the Services. Thus I would like to redraft the last two sentences of para. 9 to read:

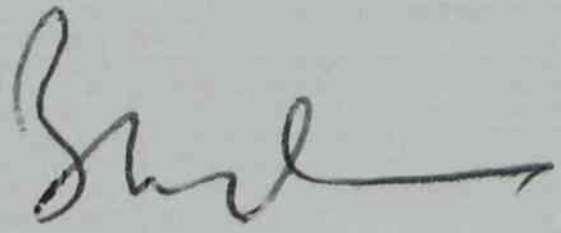
"The Ministry also agrees that it is absolutely essential that there should be the closest relationship and unity of purpose between the Chief of Public Relations and his three Service directors. This has, in fact, been a guiding principle of the unified organisation for many years."

Page 5, middle of para. 12: I do not like the words "satisfy the clamour of the media for total openness". I would much prefer to be brutally frank and honest and say:

"..... it will rarely be possible in an operational situation to satisfy the media."

Page 6, para. 14: I would hope we could inject a greater sense of urgency by using the words "is being" instead of "will be" in relation to attention to media studies as part of higher defence training and how increased awareness of the needs of the media can be encouraged.

Finally, to reduce wordage, we could usefully eliminate "situation" at the end of the first sentence of para. 2; edit a sentence in the middle of para. 4 to read at the start: "It is only in the light of such particular factors that decisions"; and in the middle of para. 10 to edit a sentence to read: "This considerable task is being progressed as quickly as possible, but it will not be practicable to complete it as early as Easter 1983."



B. INGHAM

7 February 1983



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1
Telephone ~~01-930 7022~~ 218 2111/3

ec BI 2

MO 21/8/17

Prime Minister:

I have consulted Bernard Ingham who is content with the reply although we both take the view that it is slightly bureaucratic in tone. Agree to its publication?

3rd February 1983

Prime Minister x

Dear John,

DF 7/2

Yes not

Dr 4/2

The House of Commons Defence Committee published its First Report 1982-83 on the Handling of Press and Public Information during the Falklands conflict on 16th December 1982. The Secretary of State proposes to publish the Government Observations as a Command Paper on 2nd March 1983. I am attaching the text of the Observations for the Prime Minister's information.

I understand that paragraph 11 of the Observations, concerning co-ordination between Departments, has been agreed with the Prime Minister's Press Secretary during the process of drafting.

I am copying this letter to Bernard Ingham, to David Heyhoe (Lord President's Office) and to Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

Yours ever,

(J E RIDLEY) (MISS)

A J Coles Esq

FIRST REPORT FROM THE DEFENCE COMMITTEE 1982-83

HC 17-I-II

THE HANDLING OF PRESS AND PUBLIC INFORMATION DURING THE
FALKLANDS CONFLICT

Observations presented by the Secretary of State for Defence

1. The first report from the Defence Committee Session 1982-3 was published on 16 December 1982. The Government particularly notes the Committee's overall conclusions that, notwithstanding the difficulties which geographical and operational constraints placed upon the Ministry of Defence, the basic goals of Government information policy were met and the credibility of the information issued by the Ministry of Defence was sustained throughout the campaign.
2. The Committee identifies a number of the problems inherent in dealing with the media during any operational situation. Most of the problems which have been highlighted are not unique, nor solely attributable to the Falklands campaign. The Falklands campaign did, however, bring some of these problems to the attention of a wider public and under close scrutiny.
3. Work - which was already in hand to develop Departmental plans and arrangements - has now been resumed with the added impetus of being able to draw on the lessons learned during the Falklands campaign and the observations of the Committee. But whatever the future crisis or the contingency for which plans are drawn up, the Government's policy will continue to be guided by two basic principles. Firstly, while noting the Committee's comments on propaganda, the Government continues to believe both that this must be clearly separate from the Public Relations functions and that the deliberate dissemination of misinformation is bound to be counter-productive.

Despite its short-term attractions, such a policy would inevitably lead in the longer term to a loss of trust and credibility between the media and official spokesmen and thus, ultimately, between the media and the Government. This could in turn have damaging effects on the Government's credibility.

The Committee recognised this (para 138 (iii) of the Report).

On the other hand, The Government draws a clear distinction between misinformation and withholding the whole truth. It will continue to regard the latter as quite separate and acceptable when justified on operational grounds.

4. Secondly, in any future crisis or crisis-planning, the Ministry of Defence will need to retain a considerable degree of flexibility in deciding the extent and composition of media representation. Much will depend on the location of the operation, on whether it is maritime or land-based, on the availability and ease of transport, on difficulties of communication, etc. It is only in the light of the particular factors which might arise that decisions can be taken (in close discussion with the newspaper and broadcasting organisations) about the level, extent and type of representation best suited to that crisis. There cannot be one universal plan to cover each and every possible contingency.

5. Against this background, the Government presents the following observations on the particular issues singled out by the Committee for comment and recommendation.

Censorship of Information in Times of Tension or Conflict

6. This is a subject to which the Ministry of Defence attaches considerable importance. The experience of the Falklands conflict indicated the need for a thorough and wide-ranging study.

Membership of the independently-chaired working party which has been set up to consider this question was announced on

[7] The group will endeavour to complete its work as quickly as possible, but this is a complex subject which extends beyond operations such as the Falklands conflict. We do not therefore expect the Working party to report until the Autumn of 1983.

The Role of D Notices

7. The Defence Press and Broadcasting Committee has reviewed the usefulness of D Notices during the Falklands campaign. Its experience and views will be made available to the working party on censorship.

Ministerial Responsibility For Information Policy

8. The Government notes the Committee's conclusion that in a lengthier or more arduous conflict the Secretary of State for Defence should appoint one of his Ministers to take day-to-day responsibility for defence information policy. The importance of information policy, the need for those dealing with it to be fully aware of the operational considerations, and his own responsibility to keep Parliament properly informed of developments, are such that the Secretary of State may not find it possible to delegate his day-to-day information functions to a junior Minister. But, as the Committee suggests, a final judgement on this could only be made in the light of the nature of any particular conflict.

Structure of MOD Public Relations Organisation

9. The Ministry of Defence agrees that the vacancy in the post of Chief of Public Relations at the time the crisis began inhibited the PR organisation's ability to make arrangements for the media coverage of the campaign. As was explained to the Committee this was a temporary vacancy and the Ministry has always recognised

the importance of having a professional public relations officer at the head of its PR organisation. The Ministry also agrees that it is absolutely essential that there should be the closest relationship between the Chief of Public Relations and his three Service Directors. This has been a guiding principle of the unified organisation for many years.

MOD Contingency Planning for PR in Wartime

10. The Ministry fully accepts that information matters are an intrinsic part of war and must therefore form part of the planning for all operational crises. It is clear that the information aspects need to be more fully incorporated at the earliest stages of planning. The Director of Public Relations (Army) (on behalf of the Chief of Public Relations) has been tasked with examining planning, procedures, accreditation and communication requirements as the first stage of revising all contingency plans so that the PR element can be properly and fully incorporated in future. This work is being progressed as quickly as possible, but it will not be practicable to complete this considerable task as early as Easter 1983. The Ministry agrees that the preparation and training of journalists en route to the theatre of operations is an essential part of this planning. Familiarization training was undertaken for the majority of those who went to the Falklands and particularly for those who went ashore with the first elements of the Task Force.

Co-ordination Between Departments and Ministerial Demarcation

11. The Government entirely concurs with the Committee's advice that No 10 and the Ministry of Defence should operate "in the closest conjunction" and that any failure to do so should be treated extremely seriously. But, it is not considered that any institutional changes are necessary to ensure this happens.

Throughout the Falkland Operations, the senior Public Relations staff of the MOD, the Prime Minister's Press Office and the News Department of the Foreign Office kept in close touch with each other on an hour to hour basis. It is not accepted that there was a failure of communications between No 10 and the Ministry of Defence in the matter of Ministerial demarcation. Although witnesses to the Committee gave differing views on the roles of co-ordinating Ministers, there was no confusion over who was in charge at the time. It is not proposed to make any change to the general and clearly understood principle that the Secretary of State of a Department is the focal point for the policies of that Department, and directly responsible for them.

Off-The-Record Briefings

12. The Ministry of Defence accepts the Committee's conclusion that the temporary suspension of off-the-record briefings was detrimental to relations with the media. It is agreed that briefings at all levels should be maintained throughout a conflict or crisis, though it must be accepted that it will rarely be possible in an operational situation to satisfy the clamour of the media for total openness. Nevertheless, unattributable and background briefings, in addition to on-the-record statements, enable correspondents and editors to gain a fuller appreciation of the overall difficulties being faced in an operation. They thereby help to build up and maintain a mutual trust.

Selection of Public Relations Officers

13. The Ministry does not believe that the effectiveness of the civilian Public Relations Officers in the Falklands was primarily limited by virtue of their grade or seniority or that a greater involvement of serving officer PROs would necessarily have improved

relationships with the media. What is important is not the grade of the individuals but the appropriateness of their background and experience. In an essentially peacetime environment, the opportunities for gaining relevant and realistic experience for civilian or serving officers are inevitably few, except through role-playing and greater involvement in exercises. This aspect of training will be part of the increased PR involvement in contingency planning now being studied. For any future conflict, the choice of PROs will be based as far as possible on individuals' experience and background. Given sufficient time to do so, their suitability will be assessed against the expected type of operation and against the branches of the Armed Forces likely to be involved. But availability of public relations staff at short notice will also be a factor. It is accepted that there is a requirement for one senior and experienced PR person to be clearly in charge of all information staff in the theatre of operations. That individual -- whether Service or civilian -- should have a deputy of the opposite complexion to ensure the best balance of available advice to senior officers and media.

Service Awareness Of The Media

14. The Ministry of Defence agrees that media studies should be an integral part of higher defence training, and increasing attention will be given to this subject. Limited media studies already form part of some of the courses at the Defence and Staff Colleges, and consideration will be given to how increased awareness of the needs of the media can be encouraged in all three Services. The incorporation of a greater element of PR activity in exercise play, as suggested by the Committee, will be considered in this context as well.

Technical Difficulties in Transmission of Voice and Picture Traffic

15. The Ministry of Defence has made it clear to the Committee that there was no lack of will in seeking to provide television pictures, but that severe technical difficulties were encountered. In the limited time available before the hostilities finished, it proved impossible to overcome these. The Ministry is in direct touch with British industry and the media, and together they are examining the technical, operational and other problems involved in the transmission of voice and picture traffic from the theatre of operations at sea or ashore in any future conflict.



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Press Secretary

15 September 1982

Ian Neill

DEFENCE COMMITTEE

You will be aware that the Defence Committee has invited me to give Written and Oral evidence on the handling of the media during the Falklands crisis.

The letter at Annex I from the Secretary sets out their areas of interest.

The attached paper has been prepared in the light of Millar's letter and my reading of the Written and Oral evidence to date (which, among other things, fills me with despair about the quality of contemporary journalism).

I have deliberately sought to present a largely factual account of No 10's role. But I have thought it right to preface that account with a brief but firm reference to the Government's policy objectives which conditioned and set the tone for the Information operation.

I am sure you will agree that it is right to put the onus on Departments - as a matter of fact and necessity and not out of any wish on my part to duck responsibility. I have of course come clean about the Departments/Offices represented on our co-ordinating group,

There is I fear no way of ducking the problem of co-ordination created by Sir Frank Cooper's oral evidence. The fact is my responsibility was and is to co-ordinate presentation at official level, and that is what I - and no doubt you - thought I was trying to do.

I hope however that my catalogue of our purposes as a co-ordinating group will help to clarify and possibly defuse what I think is an argument over semantics.

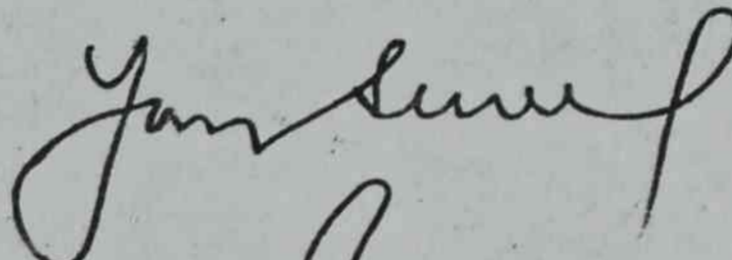
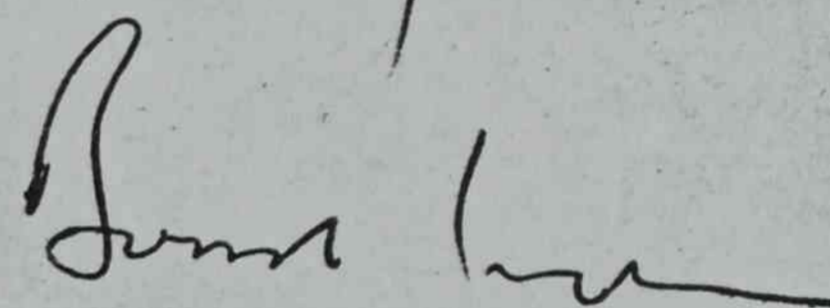
I hope that Ian McDonald will accept my account of editorial pressure for Task Force places is a fair and accurate one,

Finally, I hope no-one will deny me the liberty as distinct from the luxury of setting out the two views I reached very early in the crisis. We were all meat in the sandwich - some closer to mince than others - and I would like to create an opening to say something in defence of Press Officers - and about how the media can damage their own interests.

As for mechanics, I am asked to submit the Written Evidence by the end of September. In practice I shall not be able to do that because of the Far East trip. But I would like to get it through the Prime Minister and away to the Defence Committee by October 4.

Could I therefore ask all to whom this is copied for comments/ contributions to be with my secretary by close of play September 29?

You and John Goulden may care to clear with your Private Offices and you might let Clive Whitmore see a copy of these papers.

B. INGHAM

Neville Taylor, Esq.,
Chief of Public Relations,
Ministry of Defence.

cc Ian McDonald, MoD
Nick Fenn) FCO
John Goulden)
Ned Kelly, COI
Richard Hatfield, Cab
Off.
Brian Mower, No 10
John Coles, No 10

DRAFT EVIDENCE - NO 10 PRESS OFFICE TO DEFENCE COMMITTEE

The Government's objective during the crisis can be simply stated: to recover the Falkland Islands and the Dependencies by negotiation, if possible; but if necessary by force of arms, making every effort to minimise the loss of life.

This overall objective, and the recognition from the outset that the use of force might eventually become necessary, set the broad policy framework within which the Government Information Service (GIS) conducted its operations on behalf of Ministers.

The GIS, as a servant of policy, sought to help secure the Government's objectives in such a way as to preserve its integrity and longer-term effectiveness.

The task of informing the media and, through them the public, of developments in policy, measures and operations rests primarily with the responsible Department. Only that Department is equipped by background, expertise, flow of information and resources properly and fully to inform the media and public, taking account of all the circumstances,

The responsibility cannot be delegated to or assumed by another Department or by the Prime Minister's Press Office. But No 10 Press Office can and does assist individual Departments to get over their message. It did so during the Falklands crisis on the basis of information, and guidance on its presentation, supplied by the lead Department. In this case the two main sources of information were the FCO and MoD.

One of the tasks of the Chief Press Secretary to the Prime Minister is to co-ordinate at official level the presentation of Government policy and measures. In doing so he seeks to ensure that Departments are aware of wider considerations and events in making announcements or conducting information exercises.

During the Falklands crisis the main instrument of co-ordination was a daily meeting lasting some 30 minutes of representatives of the FCO, MoD, COI and Cabinet Office under the chairmanship of the Chief Press Secretary or his deputy. The purpose of the meetings was to take

stock of the campaign and its public presentation; to bring the Departments and Offices up-to-date with events; to anticipate, in so far as this was possible, events over the next 24 hours; to try to ensure that the Government spoke with one voice; and to agree on or make recommendations about the action required.

In addition, No 10 Press Office maintained hour by hour contact with those of Departments to keep abreast of events and developments and to secure guidance on the information to be disclosed and its presentation. Where possible, a No 10 Press Office representative attended Departmental press conferences or briefings.

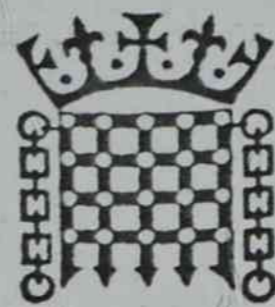
The Chief Press Secretary and his staff brief a large number of journalists, both British and foreign, in the course of the normal day, both individually and in groups. The demand for group briefings greatly increased their frequency during the crisis. The prime sources of information presented and deployed in such briefings were the policy Departments - predominantly FCO and MoD. No 10 Press Office did not take the lead in making announcements about the progress of hostilities or the number of casualties whether at Bluff Cove or in any other operation.

After the decision to dispatch the Task Force the Chief Press Secretary came under heavy direct pressure from editors who believed they would not be represented on board to make more media places available. He urged MoD's Public Relations Division to:

- increase the small number of media places initially set aside; and to
- accredit to the Task Force a media team representative of press, radio and television.

The Chief Press Secretary also formed two views at this stage:

- the constraints on the number of media berths likely to be available, the heavy demand for places and the marked reluctance of individual newspaper groups (as distinct from BBC/ITN) to contemplate pooling even within their group presented MoD's PR Division with a thankless task; and that
- the GIS would do well to win friends during this campaign; it was likely to have to draw heavily on its capital.



COMMITTEE OFFICE
HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA
01-219 3280/81 (Direct Line)
01-219 3000 (Switchboard)

DEFENCE COMMITTEE

2 August 1982

Dea Whitmore,

In my letter of 29 July, I promised to give you further information about the Committee's interest in the role of the Press Office at 10 Downing Street during the Falkland Islands conflict.

In evidence the Committee have heard that the Chief Press Secretary gave briefings on the conflict to journalists; and also held meetings with Press Officers from other departments. In particular the Committee wish to know: (a) what role was played by the Chief Press Secretary in coordinating the Government information on the Falklands. The Ministry of Defence Memorandum indicates that, "During the Falkland Islands crisis the information effort was coordinated by the No. 10 Press Office"; and (b) what arrangements were made for liaison with departmental press officers, especially from the Ministry of Defence.

Two specific instances of the involvement of the Prime Minister's Press Office have been mentioned in evidence, on which the Committee would like the comments of the Chief Press Secretary. First, it has been mentioned that it was only after representations have been made to No. 10 that the number of journalists to be taken with the Task Force was enlarged. Second, it has been said that the first announcement of the number of casualties suffered at Bluff Cove came from No. 10 Downing Street.

The Committee will be examining further submissions made to them and the oral evidence given in due course and should any further matters come to light where the role of the Prime Minister's

Press Office is at issue, I will let you know in advance of Mr. Ingham's attendance before the Committee.

Yours sincerely

Douglas Miller

Douglas Millar
Clerk to the Committee

Clive Whitmore Esq.,
Principal Private Secretary,
Prime Minister's Office,
10 Downing Street,
LONDON SW1.

MR INGHAM

The letter from the Clerk to the Defence Committee setting out the ground to be covered by our memorandum on the role of the Press Office during the Falklands operation has now arrived, and I attach a copy.

It seems to me that the memorandum need not be very long, though the two specific examples of your involvement which the Clerk gives are a good indication of the difficult ground on to which you are likely to be drawn when you give oral evidence.

You will obviously want to clear your paper in draft with the MOD and the FCO. When you have agreed it with them, I think that you should seek the Prime Minister's approval for it.

I notice that the Clerk's letter does not set a deadline for the submission of the memorandum. Perhaps you would like to have a word with him about this yourself.

AWH.

Mr Whitmore ^{the} 4/8

For the record.

Spoke to Mr. [unclear] today.

Requires paper for end September.

*Will send copy of all evidence
so far to me by end*

August.

Ingham 4/8.

3 August 1982



COMMITTEE OFFICE
HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA
01-219 3280/81 (Direct Line)
01-219 3000 (Switchboard)

DEFENCE COMMITTEE

2 August 1982

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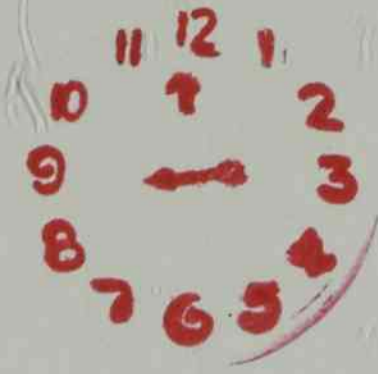
Yours sincerely

Douglas Miller

Douglas Millar
Clerk to the Committee

Clive Whitmore Esq.,
Principal Private Secretary,
Prime Minister's Office,
10 Downing Street,
LONDON SW1.

- 3 AUG 1982



CONFIDENTIAL



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

2 August 1982

Parliament.
Zee AH
cc Chief Whip
Mr Ingham

Dear Mr Millar,

Thank you for your letter of 29 July 1982 conveying your Committee's invitation to Bernard Ingham to give oral evidence to the Committee on Tuesday 9 November at 4.00 p.m.

I have consulted the Prime Minister, and she has authorised Mr Ingham to accept the invitation.

We will also let the Committee have the memorandum which they have asked for, and I look forward to receiving a further letter from you defining the ground which the memorandum should cover. The sooner we can have your guidance the better.

Bob
x/

Yours sincerely,

Steve Whitmore

Douglas Millar Esq.

AH

Copy to Mr. Ingham.
Chief Whip.

1.



COMMITTEE OFFICE
HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA
01-219 3280/81 (Direct Line)
01-219 3000 (Switchboard)

DEFENCE COMMITTEE

Prime Minister.

We have, as you know, been trying to fend off this request. Both the Chief Whip and I have spoken, separately, to Sir Timothy Kirtan, the Chairman of the Committee, but it now seems to no avail.

I think that we shall have to let Mr Ingham give evidence. Agree?

29 July, 1982

DM
29 vii

Yes
[Signature]

Dear Whitmore,

Further to the letter sent to you on behalf of the Defence Committee on 1st July, I have now been instructed by the Committee to invite the Chief Press Secretary to give oral evidence to the Committee on Tuesday 9 November at 4 p.m. in the House of Commons. The Committee wish to put questions about the role of the Press Office at No. 10 during the Falkland Islands conflict, and the relations of the Press Officer with other Government Departments in coordinating information at that time.

It would be helpful to the Committee if the Memorandum requested on 1st July could be provided in advance so that it can be used as a basis for that session.

Since I dictated this letter, we have now spoken

I suggested by phone and I will write again about the exact scope of the Memorandum requested.

Yes since I

Douglas Millar

Douglas Millar
Clerk to the Committee

I suggested to him that he might wish to reformulate his original questions in the light of the evidence which other witnesses had since given to the Committee.

Clive Whitmore, Esq.,
Principal Private Secretary,
Prime Minister's Office,
No. 10 Downing Street,
London SW1.

cc Mr Ingham

MR WHITMORE

RE THE FALKLAND ISLANDS

Douglas Miller, Clerk to the Defence Select Committee, (219-3280) telephoned this morning to say that he is writing to you today to say that an invitation for Mr Ingham to attend to give evidence to the Select Committee in the autumn is to be issued and he is instructed by his committee to send a note to the press about their programme for this inquiry and saying that No 10 are being invited to give evidence.

He mentioned that he had had no reply to his letter of 1 July.

He said that the note will be given to the press this afternoon.

N.M.

I spoke to Miller to clear up any misunderstanding about X/ am. I explained that I had spoken with

Sir Timothy Kinnear, the

Angela

11.15 am
29.7.82

Chairman of the Committee, but I would not reply to his Clerk's letter and that he would tell his Clerk that I would not be doing so any day.

Miller said that his message had not reached him in his form but he was not complaining.

AM

29th 82.



10 DOWNING STREET

The Whitmore ^{BMW} 28 vii 82.

With the compliments of

This is not going to make any
appearance genuine even. He is
just plain wrong on some points.
And whatever he thought I was
doing I - and the people who
met with me - felt I or Roman
Rome was coordinating.

We shall have to seek refuge
in an acceptable definition of
coordination

(P.D.O.)

I'm afraid this extract reveals
all too clearly the chaos that
was the NOD.

Sept 28
7



*Parliament
deleted
N. Ingram.
28/7
V. ...
K
28/7*

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

Main Building, Whitehall, London SW1A 2HB

Telephone (Direct Dialling) 01-218 2839

(Switchboard) 01-218 9000

PERMANENT UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE

DJB/82/1178

C A Whitmore Esq
10 Downing Street
LONDON SW1

27 July 1982

Dear Whitmore

HOUSE OF COMMONS DEFENCE COMMITTEE: EVIDENCE BY SIR FRANK COOPER

... You will know that Sir Frank Cooper appeared before the HCDC to give evidence on 21 July; he thought you might like to see the attached extracts (paragraphs 48-62 and 75-76) of the draft minutes of evidence about the role played by No 10, the Cabinet Office and the FCO in the information effort during the Falklands crisis. The draft minutes have been amended in manuscript by Sir Frank.

2. I am copying this to David Wright and Andrew Burns.

*K. ...
D J Bowen*

D J BOWEN
Private Secretary

oversimplify but at the beginning in the days before the Task Force sailed it was not only the case that there was not a plan on the shelf for the handling of information, though for the reasons you adduced there were plans, for example, for the conversion of merchant ships but no plans for the handling of information, but there was not either a chief publicity officer in the Ministry of Defence. How long had that post been vacant?

(Sir Frank Cooper) The position on that was this. We are talking about a chief public relations rather than chief publicity officer. There was an acting chief public relations officer who was acting, he was being paid for the job and he was actually in charge of public relations at that time. We had been waiting for several weeks for the arrival of Neville Taylor and the reason for this was twofold: that there was a possibility that he might have gone to another job which had then to be resolved, and that he was just finishing off some work in the DHSS, and he arrived in about the second week in April.

46. So he arrived in the second week in April and was he in charge of the handling of information in the MOD when he arrived?

(Sir Frank Cooper) No. He had a little run in period because, although he was in the Ministry of Defence at an earlier period in his career, he started off by not taking over full control of the whole of the Falkland Islands operations but having a general remit over the rest of the Ministry of Defence field. He was then put explicitly and directly in full charge on, I think, about the 18th or 19th May.

~~47. So until then Mr Macdonald was still in charge?~~

(Sir Frank Cooper) Yes.

48. What about responsibility on the official side in the Government as a whole? In annex B, paragraph 4, of your evidence

to us you say "During the Falkland Islands crisis the information effort was co-ordinated on a daily basis by the No. 10 Press Office." Could you tell us a bit more about how exactly that worked?

(Sir Frank Cooper) I have been away in Brussels, and I was slightly surprised to see that. I thought it was a slightly odd statement, quite frankly. I think what that is shorthand for is that there was a daily meeting in No. 10 under the Chief Press Officer, Bernard ^{INGHAM} England (P), of all the departments that were in any way remotely connected with what was going on. I would put that in our jargon as ^a touching hands exercise rather than a co-ordination exercise. We normally send the Chief Press Officer, sometimes the CPR, occasionally acting CPR, but it was a sort of quick exchange of the day's ^{news} views rather than a detailed co-ordination exercise.

49. So if No. 10 did not perform the co-ordinating role, who did?

(Sir Frank Cooper) I do not think there was a real need for a major co-ordinating role. There were a few meetings of the departments which were involved but in the earlier part of the whole period - I am going right back to the beginning of April, the first few weeks in April - much interest was centred on the diplomatic activity and that, of course, was led by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. We were, I think, then busily assembling and getting the Task Force on the way so that was ~~think~~ a perfectly straightforward exercise. Throughout the period the main links were between the Foreign Office and ourselves and we are very close to the Foreign Office. We work every day of our lives very, very closely with the Foreign Office and I think very well with the Foreign Office. We have got direct communications with them. Everybody knows everybody very well. We have got tubes which can send papers in one direction and another, television which goes from one building to another, and all

the press releases that we put out were seen by the Foreign Office and were sent off by them to their posts overseas as they wished. So co-ordination is, I find, rather an odd word, altogether. I do not think you have a great co-ordination exercise.

Mr Dunn

50. Was there any occasion on which you made a statement at the Ministry of Defence/^{after} which immediately or consequently in a reasonably short period of time another statement was made by another department on the subject?

(Sir Frank Cooper) Not that I am aware of.

Mr Patten

51. I am surprised about what you say about co-ordination. Not very long ago a Minister was reported to co-ordinate the Government's information services. Is there still a Minister co-ordinating the Government's information services? Was he co-ordinating them during the Falklands crisis?

(Sir Frank Cooper) Oh, yes, he was aware of what was going on because he was briefed daily and there was a small presentation unit within the Cabinet Office which was arranging and sorting information and making it available.

52. Was the same Minister, the Leader of the House then, you are saying responsible for the co-ordination of information?

(Sir Frank Cooper) Yes.

Dr Gilbert

53. You say you were surprised that this passage appeared in your document, Sir Frank. Who put it in?

(Sir Frank Cooper) I think I am accepting responsibility for it. All I am saying is that had I been writing it myself I would not have put it in quite that way, to be quite frank.

54. My question stands.

(Sir Frank Cooper) I take full responsibility for it and I think I was putting a gloss on it. What I would have said had I been writing that was that there were daily meetings chaired by the No. 10 Press Office. But "co-ordination" gives a sense of direction, a sense of somebody sorting things out etc., etc., and though it is true there were occasions when this was necessary and there were discussions between Ministers on occasion whether something should or should not happen, there was not time to co-ordinate in the sense of having orderly meetings. I think it is terribly important to understand this, that the news really did not start to come in from the Falkland Islands till the afternoon and evening, and the real work of the day took place between about 4 o'clock in the afternoon and 10 o'clock at night because of the difference in the timescale in that the Falkland Islands were four hours behind London time. So there was not any news in the morning of any kind virtually.

55. I do not think anyone on the Committee is actually accusing you of co-ordinating anything. We are obliged for that disavowal. Nevertheless, was this document of yours not cleared with No. 10 before it was sent to the Committee?

(Sir Frank Cooper) Which document?

56. The Ministry of Defence memorandum, House of Commons Defence Committee?

(Sir Frank Cooper) I think it was seen by various other government departments but we are responsible for it.

57. That is an interesting concept you are beginning to raise. Are you suggesting other departments might have dissented from some elements in it?

(Sir Frank Cooper) I am not suggesting that at all.

58. Should we infer that you are content that all other government departments would subscribe wholeheartedly to the contents of this submission from the Ministry of Defence?

(Sir Frank Cooper) I think the submission to the Committee is from the Ministry of Defence.

59. I understand that very well but I repeat my question: are you confident that all other arms of government would subscribe to what is in this document?

(Sir Frank Cooper) I am pretty confident, yes. They might have individual glosses to put on it but I am quite clear that they would. In fact, it was seen by No. 10 and by the Foreign Office as well.

Chairman

60. I wonder why they did not delete it then?

(Sir Frank Cooper) I am terribly sorry, I said I was actually away in Brussels on Monday and Tuesday.

61. I am just wondering, if No. 10 saw it, why they did not delete it when it says they were co-ordinating? It is rather surprising.

(Sir Frank Cooper) I am not sure, though I suspect we put these words in ourselves and I think they might have been better phrased.

Mr Patten

62. Sir Frank, you draft beautifully. How would you have phrased it? What would you have said instead of "co-ordination"?

(Sir Frank Cooper) ~~I~~ think I would simply have said, during the Falkland Islands crisis there was a daily meeting of press officers in No. 10 so that everyone was in touch with what was happening. I do not think I would go any further than that, and ~~I think~~ that is the truth, quite frankly.

vote expenditure it would fall upon between yourselves and the FCO and, as it eventually turned out, the contingency fund?

(Sir Frank Cooper) I cannot recall a single instance of that kind and I would be amazed if there ever was one. The arrangements we had with the FCO were very straightforward in that we passed the information to them by whatever were the quickest means. We were in contact with them 24 hours a day, seven days a week, throughout and they then passed the information on to their post overseas. I think we did get a couple of complaints that we had not passed information on quickly enough to our people in the UN. I do recall those and we remedied those very quickly indeed. But there was no - I cannot remember a single case of an aggressive argument between ourselves and the FCO throughout in this area. ^{The} departments are very used to working together and they work very well together.

Mr Mates

75. Can we go back to the question of the co-ordination of information and couple that in perhaps with the requirement for censorship because one hears many conflicting stories such as from The Times this morning the frustration of a journalist who alleged that at times his stories were virtually withheld to the stories one heard that stuff was coming back from the task force with the agreement of the commanders there and was then being held at Northwood and not disseminated there for other reasons, to the arguments that one has heard, some for political, some for military, some for public information, reasons, that arguments between No. 10 and the MOD, Northwood and the Foreign Office on what should or should not be released had quite often led to a lot of muddle. When you had passed through those first traumatic days it must have been clear that all was not entirely well with the information set-up so what were you doing in that lull that there was that you described to us to try and get it right and

was the end result nevertheless proper co-ordination so that the various muddles which have now been criticised did not recur?

(Sir Frank Cooper) I do not think what you describe as muddles really came out of the lack of co-ordination quite frankly.

76. We did on occasion have Ministry of Defence denying something that had come out of somewhere else and this has happened over several things when information was coming in as hard as being reported on the BBC or ITV that was then denied by the Ministry of Defence and confirmed in the morning. That does not put you in a very good shape. Either you did not know when you made the denial or you were making the denial for some other reason, knowing that the BBC or ITV got it right. This appeared to the general public to be some area of muddle.

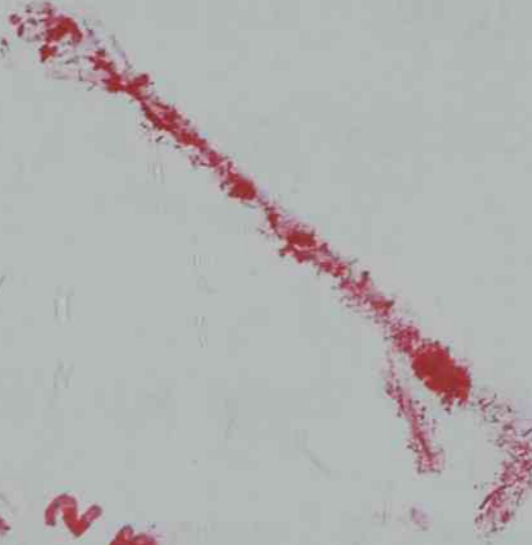
(Sir Frank Cooper) I cannot recall a particular instance of the kind you are mentioning.

77. Let us go back to the moment of invasion. That was being denied until six o'clock about.

(Sir Frank Cooper) Yes, because the confirmation that it had taken place did not actually come in until rather late in the day. There is no doubt about that. Could I just try and pick some of the points up that you are making? It is certainly true that on a number of occasions we released ^{from} Government items of information that had been stopped in the task force. Let us pick up a case which was mentioned this morning, namely the Harriers' flying accident. That actually we would have preferred to have kept totally silent about, quite frankly, because - solely because - of operational reasons. We had a very limited stock of Harriers at that time down in the South Atlantic. It was terribly important not to give away the fact that two of those had an accident and

JUL 1968

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Parliament
J. W. A. H.

MR INGHAM

FALKLAND ISLANDS : DEFENCE COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY

As I told you, the Chief Whip asked me to see Sir Timothy Kitson, the Chairman of the Defence Committee, after he had himself found some difficulty in persuading Sir Timothy that it was not a good idea to seek written and, possibly, oral evidence from No 10 as part of the Committee's inquiry into the handling of public and press information during the Falkland Islands conflict.

I accordingly had a short non-meeting with Sir Timothy Kitson yesterday evening. He said that he understood our reluctance to give evidence to his Committee but the fact was that the memorandum which the Ministry of Defence had already submitted to the Committee referred to No 10's co-ordinating role in the Government's information effort during the Falklands crisis. The Committee's special advisers, including Mr Chapman Pincher and Mr Simon Jenkins, had fastened on to this and were urging the Committee to pursue the part played by No 10.

I told Sir Timothy Kitson that the Prime Minister did not want No 10 to give either written or oral evidence. So far as we had been able to establish, witnesses from No 10 had never appeared before a Select Committee. That was our starting point. On the other hand, I saw the difficulty he was in with the rest of his Committee, given that the Ministry of Defence memorandum referred to No 10's role and that, in any case, it was common knowledge in the media that you had briefed the lobby, in the usual way, throughout the Falklands crisis. Sir Timothy Kitson and I agreed therefore that he would try not to raise the matter at all himself and that he would seek to dissuade those members of his Committee, like Mr Chris Patten, who were showing a clear

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- 2 -

interest in this aspect of the inquiry from pursuing it, but of course he could not guarantee to deliver them, especially the Labour Members of the Committee. I said that I for my part would speak to Sir Frank Cooper, who was due to give evidence the following day to explain the background to him and to ask him to make it clear to the Committee that No 10's role had been no more than the customary briefing of the lobby. I would also ask him to make clear that our so called co-ordinating function consisted for practical purposes of no more than your holding a daily meeting to ensure that you, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Ministry of Defence were all aware of the latest political and military situation before you talked to your respective clients. In short he should try to get over to the Committee that there was nothing unusual in No 10's role.

Sir Timothy Kitson and I agreed that we would see how the Ministry of Defence's evidence went today and then take stock again. In the mean time he would talk to the Clerk to the Committee and explain why there had been no response to the Acting Clerk's letter of 1 July to me.

I spoke this morning to Sir Frank Cooper on the lines of the above. I also told the Chief Whip about the outcome of my meeting with Sir Timothy Kitson.

JKW.

21 July 1982

CONFIDENTIAL



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

12 July, 1982

When the Prime Minister saw you this morning, there was a brief discussion about the approach we had had from the Defence Committee inviting evidence from No. 10 as part of their inquiry into the handling of public and press information during the Falkland Islands conflict.

As we agreed, I enclose a copy of the Acting Clerk's letter to me and of the Clerk's letter to the Ministry of Defence. I also attach a copy of Sir Robert Armstrong's advice which the Prime Minister has seen but has not responded to.

You said that you would have a word with Sir Timothy Kitson about this approach from his Committee. I shall not reply to the Acting Clerk's letter until I hear the outcome of your discussion with Sir Timothy Kitson.

C. A. WHITMORE

The Rt. Hon. Michael Jopling, M.P.

FILE ^{Parliament} SW.

1.

Prime Minister

Mr Ingham - I agree with

this advice.

Content for me to reply to the

Chair to the Defence Committee on the

basis of the attached draft?

ALL
Priv

Ref. A08947

MR WHITMORE

Yes
not

Falkland Islands: Defence Committee Inquiry

Thank you for your minute of 5 July.

2. I know of no precedents for members of the Prime Minister's office being invited to give or giving evidence to a Select Committee. I think that we should avoid creating such a precedent if we possibly can.

3. As to the invitation for written evidence, I think you should simply decline it, on the grounds that the Ministry of Defence evidence will fully cover on behalf of the Government as a whole the matters referred to.

4. An invitation to submit oral evidence will be more difficult. I think that we could hope to succeed in a refusal to allow Private Secretaries to give evidence, on the well-established ground that a Private Secretary is no more than an arm or emanation of his Minister and transactions between Ministers and their Private Secretaries are privileged. But I fear that it will be difficult to claim that Mr Ingham is a Private Secretary; if he was summoned and we tried to get him off on that basis, we could well fail. If we are to refuse, it will have to be on the basis that there is nothing that he can add to the evidence of the Ministry of Defence; but I am not sure that that ground is strong enough either. So I think that we should try to establish a base for a position where, if Mr Ingham is invited and it is decided that he has to go, we can insist on his going with a Ministry of Defence team (and preferably a team led by Sir Frank Cooper).

5. The draft reply attached reflects these considerations.

REA

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

8th July 1982

DRAFT LETTER TO J C McDowell from ^{Mr Whitmore.} ~~SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG~~

cc Peter Andrews, MOD

Thank you for your letter of 1st July.

I do not wish to comment separately on the points set out in ~~Mr~~ Millar's letter of 24th June to ~~Mr Peter~~ Andrews or on the arrangements for coordination in the Government Information Services. These matters will be fully covered on behalf of the Government in the Ministry of Defence's reply to ~~Mr~~ Millar's letter.

I note that the Committee may wish to take oral evidence from the Prime Minister's office, though I have to say that I am not clear that there will be any matter which will not be able to be fully covered by the evidence to be given by the Ministry of Defence.



File AH
cc Bernard

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

cc Mr Ingham

FALKLAND ISLANDS :
DEFENCE COMMITTEE INQUIRY

I attach a copy of a letter which I have had from the Acting Clerk to the Defence Committee of the House of Commons which is undertaking an inquiry into the handling of public and press information during the Falkland Islands conflict. As you will see, the Committee are seeking written evidence from No 10 and are giving us notice that they may wish to take oral evidence.

This approach seems to me to raise two issues. First - and more importantly -, should we resist the attempt by the Committee to take evidence from officials in the Prime Minister's office? As far as I know, there are no precedents in the recent past for this office giving evidence, whether written or oral, to a select committee.

Second, their inquiry involves a number of departments. In the Clerk's letter of 24 June 1982 to the Ministry of Defence he mentions not only the Ministry of Defence and 10 Downing Street but also the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the COI. It may be that the Ministry of Defence will automatically take the lead in co-ordinating replies to the Committee, but you may wish to consider whether there is a role here for the Cabinet Office.

x/ I should be grateful if we could have an early word.

AH.

5 July 1982



COMMITTEE OFFICE
HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA
01-219 3280/81 (Direct Line)
01-219 3000 (Switchboard)

DEFENCE COMMITTEE

1st July, 1982

Dear Whitmore,

The Defence Committee are undertaking an inquiry into the handling of public and press information during the Falkland Islands conflict. The inquiry will begin with evidence from the Ministry of Defence who have been asked to provide a Memorandum. I enclose a copy of the letter dated 24 June 1982 sent to the Ministry.

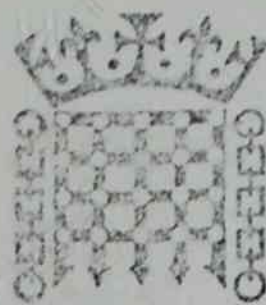
The Committee invite your comments on the points set out in this letter and in particular are interested in the arrangements for co-ordination in the Government Information Services. It would be appreciated if your comments could reach this office by 16 July. I am to add that, subsequent to your reply, the Committee may wish to take oral evidence from the Prime Minister's office.

Yours sincerely,

J.C. McDowell

J.C. McDowell
Acting Clerk to the Committee

C.A. Whitmore, Esq.,
Principal Private Secretary,
Prime Minister's Office,
10, Downing Street,
LONDON SW1.



COMMITTEE OFFICE
HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA
01-219 3280/81 (Direct Line)
01-219 3000 (Switchboard)

DEFENCE COMMITTEE

24 June, 1982

The Committee have already announced that they are to undertake an inquiry into the handling of public and press information during the Falkland Islands conflict. To begin this inquiry the Committee wish the Ministry to provide a Memorandum and subsequently to take oral evidence from the Ministry of Defence witnesses on Wednesday 21st July at 10.30 a.m. We can discuss later whom it would be appropriate for the Committee to examine when, having seen your Memorandum we decide upon our approach to the subject. At this morning's meeting it was suggested that Sir Frank Cooper and, separately Admiral Fieldhouse might be able to help the Committee.

In order to help them prepare for the session on 21st July the Committee wish to receive the Memorandum not later than Tuesday 13th July.

It would be helpful to the Committee if your Memorandum could cover the following points:

- (a) What is your information policy; are the arrangements for issuing information different in peace and war; what are the differences; and does the practice vary according to the degree of intensity and type of conflict?
- (b) How does the Ministry of Defence information organisation fit in with the overall Government Information Service. In the Falklands conflict what were the respective roles of MoD, CoI, FCO and the Prime Minister's Office in this context. What necessary improvements in organisation have been identified following the recent experience?
- (c) What was the relationship of psychological operations and information policy during the conflict; what role did the information services play in "misinformation" of the enemy?
- (d) What is the organisation of Ministry of Defence information services; how many staff are employed; and what criteria were used on selecting staff for appointment?

(e) What are the criteria for deciding release of information, particularly information which might be operationally sensitive. What were the respective roles of HMS Hermes, HMS Warrior and MoD in Whitehall in this respect. Could you give examples of difficult decisions which had to be taken on release of information e.g. a release of details of casualties?

(f) What were the arrangements for vetting despatches and broadcasting copy (a) in the Falklands (b) bt HMS Warrior (c) at MoD in Whitehall. What use was made of the D Notices, and how far was there any censorship of copy prepared from external sources?

(g) What liaison was there between those working on information services with the Task Force; at HMS Warrior; in Whitehall?

(h) What were the technical means of communication between the South Atlantic and HMS Warrior and Whitehall; who decided the priority given to operational and press traffic?

(i) What arrangements were used other than official means to get despatches to London (e.g. through hospital and POW ships going to Montivideo; servicemens' mail; addition of copy to "service messages")?

(j) What were the arrangements for official briefing in the United Kingdom; at what bases were the briefings given; how were participants selected? What evidence is there that information was released from MoD through unofficial means?

(k) How were journalists and broadcasters chosen to be accredited to the Task Force. How was it decided to which ships/land units they would be attached? How did some correspondents manage to get more information to London than others. Were correspondents allowed to send and receive service messages?

(l) What part did service welfare organisations play in the decision about the release of information; and in the coordination of follow-up action?

(m) What arrangements were made under Ministry of Defence auspices on Ascension Island and elsewhere for broadcasts to the Falkland Islands and Argentina?

Douglas Millar
Clerk to the Committee

Peter Andrews, Esq.,
GF1, Main Building,
Ministry of Defence, SW1.



