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Mr Coles ✓ *WJL* $\frac{L}{12}$
To see
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
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2nd December 1982

Dear Jim,

OFFICIAL DESPATCH ON THE FALKLANDS OPERATION

We spoke about your letter of the 30th November.

I explained that we had been able to reach agreement on all the points recorded in Richard Hatfield's minute of the 26th November but that Admiral Fieldhouse had had some difficulty with the proposed amendment to the fifth paragraph of the "Background" section of his Despatch. He takes the view that the amendment does not reflect the facts as he understands them.

So far as he is concerned he had been forewarned of the possible need to deploy surface ships to the South Atlantic as early as Monday the 29th March when the first SSN was despatched. This is reflected in the third paragraph of the "Background" section. The informal warning was confirmed on 30th March in a signal to him from MOD asking him to nominate ships on a contingency basis.

Admiral Fieldhouse accepts that a reference to the signal in his despatch could be misunderstood and that a reference to the order he was given, following the Prime Minister's meeting in the House on 31st March, to begin covert preparations for a Task Force would more accurately and clearly describe the sequence of events.

On this basis Admiral Fieldhouse would wish this paragraph to read as follows:

"On 31st March I was instructed to make covert preparations for a Task Force for operations in the South Atlantic. On 2nd April, after the Argentinian invasion the preparations were allowed to be conducted openly."

A J Coles Esq



You subsequently confirmed, via the Duty Clerk, that the Prime Minister would be content with this wording and the despatch will be sent for printing accordingly.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Brian Fall and Richard Hatfield.

Yours ever

NHR/evans

(N H R EVANS)