

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?

Yes not

ALL  
Priv

Ref. A08947

MR WHITMORE

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 <sup>Mr Whitmore.</sup> ~~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.



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 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.

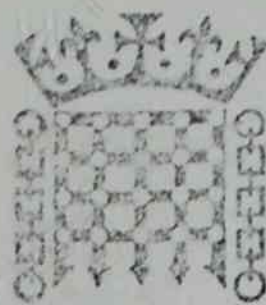
The Committee invite your comments on the points set out in this letter and in particular are interested in the arrangements for co-ordination in the Government Information Services. It would be appreciated if your comments could reach this office by 16 July. I am to add that, subsequent to your reply,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



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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.

