



Prime Minister

Agree that Lady Young
should speak as at X
if pressed in the House of Lords?

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

27 June, 1983

A.J.C. 22/6.

Dear John,

Yes m

Sinking of the Belgrano: PQ by Lord Hatch of Lusby

Lady Young will be answering a Starred Question in the House of Lords tomorrow (28 June) from Lord Hatch of Lusby about the circumstances surrounding the sinking of the 'General Belgrano'. The text of the question and the proposed answer is attached. The answer deliberately does not address specifically the question of the timing of the decision to sink the Belgrano, but if Lady Young is pressed on this point, the Ministry of Defence have recommended that she reply in the following terms:

X /

'The change in the rules of engagement to permit an attack on the Belgrano outside the Total Exclusion Zone was agreed earlier in the day on 2 May, and the actual attack took place at 1857 GMT'.

The Ministry of Defence believe that such a line would be consistent with what has already been said publicly, but in view of the sensitivity of this subject, I should be grateful for your confirmation that the Prime Minister would be content for Lady Young to use it in case of need.

I am copying this to Richard Mottram (MOD).

Your ever
John Holmes

(J E Holmes)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
Private Secretary
10 Downing Street

PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONORAL ANSWER on 28 June 1983

Text of Question

Please submit :-
a draft Answer & background
& supplementary notes
to Parliamentary Unit

(2)

before NOON

FRIDAY 24 JUNE

The Lord Hatch of Lusby - To ask Her Majesty's Government what were the times and dates of the receipt by the then Foreign Secretary of the Peruvian-American peace proposals in May 1982; of the communication of those proposals by the Foreign Secretary to the Prime Minister; and of the decision to torpedo the "General Belgrano".

My Lords, the first intimation that the Government had of the existence of any proposals from the President of Peru came in a series of conversations between Mr Pym and Mr Haig in Washington on 2 May. After necessary clarification of Mr Haig's ideas, Mr Pym telegraphed a report to London at just after five o'clock in the afternoon Washington time - that is, 2215 GMT. The attack on the General Belgrano took place over three hours before that.

27 JUN 1963

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

28 June 1983

SINKING OF THE BELGRANO

As I told you on the telephone earlier this morning, the Prime Minister agrees that, if pressed on the timing of the decision to sink the Belgrano, Lady Young may use the language in your letter of 27 June.

I am copying this letter to Richard Mottram (Ministry of Defence).

A. J. COLES

J.E. Holmes, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

NR