

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL



file No  
CDP

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

10 October 1984

THE BELGRANO

Thank you for your helpful letter of 10 October which usefully supplements our own records. You will, I am sure, clear with us in due course the line which you propose to take in dealing with any questions about these exchanges at Mr. Ponting's trial.

I am copying this letter to Henry Steel (Law Officers' Department).

CHARLES POWELL

Richard Mottram, Esq.,  
Ministry of Defence.

CST

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL



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

MO 5/21

10th October 1984

*Pl. keep on  
file with our own  
pps. attached  
oan*

*Dear Charles,*

THE BELGRANO

You telephoned me about references in today's papers to exchanges between Mr Stanley and No 10 Downing Street on the terms of the replies to Mr Dalyell about the sinking of the Belgrano.

There were three sets of exchanges about the handling of Mr Dalyell's questions:

a. The first concerned Mr Dalyell's letter to the Prime Minister of 5th April following up her letter of 4th April to Mr Denzil Davies. The key documents here, as we discussed, are John Coles' letter to me of 6th April and Nick Evans' reply of 11th April. Incidentally, both Mr Ponting and Minister (AF) are recorded on internal minutes here as supporting the idea of a general reply to Mr Dalyell from the Prime Minister.

b. In April there were discussions within the Ministry of Defence about the response to be made by the Defence Secretary to the separate letter he had received from Mr Dalyell on 19th March. I attach a copy of an internal minute here dated 13th April to me from PS/Minister (AF) which records a conversation between Mr Stanley and Mr Coles about the handling of these questions. The Secretary of State subsequently sent Mr Dalyell a reply on 18th April, which was copied to Mr Coles, referring back to the Prime Minister's letter to Mr Davies (further copy attached for ease of reference).

c. Mr Dalyell returned to the charge at the beginning of May asking again for a reply to his original letter. Mr Ponting put up further advice dated 9th May, paragraph 2 of which reports a conversation between Mr Stanley and

C Powell Esq



/ . No 10 Downing Street. I also attach for completeness  
/ a subsequent minute from Mr Stanley's office of 10th May  
and my reply of 11th May. Following this Mr Heseltine  
replied to Mr Dalyell on 14th May again declining to  
answer his original 9 questions (copy attached).

You will see that the accounts in today's newspapers are  
somewhat garbled in respect of these exchanges.

I might incidentally also add that I am seeking the advice  
of my Permanent Under Secretary about how I should respond to questions  
on these exchanges and others between Ministers and officials if  
I am questioned about them at Mr Ponting's trial.

I am copying this letter and the attachments to Henry Steel  
(Attorney General's Chambers).

*Yours etc,*

*Richard Mottram*

(R C MOTTRAM)