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PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Prime Minister

We are
working on
a reply

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or TF

The Office of the Leader of
the Opposition

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1 February 1985

Dear Prime Minister,

I am sure that your attention will have been drawn to a report in The Guardian today which suggests that "Admiral Sir John Fieldhouse, Chief of Naval Staff during the Falklands conflict, told a top-level meeting in Whitehall last year that Ministry of Defence officials had changed his account of when the Argentine cruiser, the General Belgrano, was first sighted in order to make it consistent with earlier public statements".

The Guardian adds that "Although officials denied the claim, Mr. Richard Mottram, Private Secretary to the Defence Secretary, Mr. Michael Heseltine, acknowledged that Sir John had made the assertion, and that there was an argument about it".

You will, I am sure, recognise the importance of clearing this matter up. I would be grateful for your observations. Because of the potential sensitivity of the issues raised by an alleged alteration to a Commander-in-Chief's report I am not making this letter public knowledge.

Yours sincerely
Margaret Thatcher

Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher MP