



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

18 February, 1985.

Attached is a copy of the latest letter from the Leader of the Opposition about the prosecution of Mr. Ponting. This is just to record that the Prime Minister does not intend to reply to the letter, and indeed it seems that the letter has been written in the expectation that there would be no reply.

I am sending copies of this letter and its enclosure to Janet Lewis-Jones (Lord President's Office), David Morris (Lord Privy Seal's Office), Henry Steel (Law Officers' Department), and Murdo Maclean (Chief Whip's Office).

(Timothy Flesher)

Denis Brennan, Esq.,
Ministry of Defence.

06

so

so



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

18 February, 1985

I undertook to let you have, for defensive purposes, the answers to those of Mr. Kinnock's questions in his letter of 14 February which relate specifically to the Prime Minister and her office. The answers are as follows:-

Question 2

The Prime Minister is answering a question today to the effect that while she has no recollection of the specific occasion it is possible that the Secretary of State for Defence reported orally on or shortly after 26 July.

Question 3

Refer to Question 2. The Prime Minister would not, of course, have made any comment on the question of prosecution since the investigation had yet to be concluded.

Question 4

Yes.

Question 5

Yes.

Question 6

Because the reference to the DPP of a case involving a senior Ministry of Defence official was clearly sufficiently important to merit being drawn to the Prime Minister's attention.

Question 7

No, but my office is usually kept informed.


Question 8

No.

Question 9

There is no record on our papers of such a request having been made but perhaps you could check yours to make sure. In any event the implication of this office having been informed of the reference to the DPP is that we would be notified of the outcome of that reference.

/The

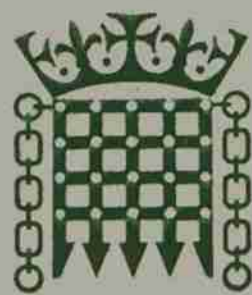


The rest of Mr. Kinnock's questions relate specifically to internal Ministry of Defence communications.

(Timothy Flesher)

D. Brennan, Esq.,
Ministry of Defence

TF



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Office of the Leader of
the Opposition

17 February 1985

Dear Prime Minister,

Thank you for your letter of 15 February.

I note that you say that Ministers were not involved in the Law Officers' decision to prosecute Mr Ponting. On that basis, your refusal to answer the questions which I put to you in my letter of 14 February is even more difficult to understand.

With regard to the more immediate matter of Monday's debate:

Last Thursday you put down a motion for debate on the Sinking of the General Belgrano. Then, in your letter last Friday, you said that the matter of Mr Ponting's prosecution could be pursued in the debate.

My view - as I said twice in the House last week - is that the debate must be about the conduct of Ministers and the matters which I raised in my question to you first on Tuesday and then on Thursday about the proposed deception of Parliament by Ministers.

That is the essence of the amendment which I have put to your Motion. They are the "matters to be pursued" in Monday's debate.

Yours sincerely
Neil Kinnock

NEIL KINNOCK

Rt Hon Margaret Thatcher MP