

Ref: A08056

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MR. COLES

There was a brief discussion in Cabinet this morning about the false reports circulating in the Press and elsewhere to the effect that we had intelligence reports of a decision to invade the Falkland Islands much earlier than we did.

2. For all the usual reasons - source protection and so on - the Prime Minister will want to be extremely careful about what she says in Parliament or to the Press on this. She will not want to say anything which might imply a readiness to release intelligence reports to a Select Committee, if it was investigating the affair, or otherwise to make intelligence material available. Nor, I suggest, should she indicate that there is any special review of the intelligence coverage of Argentina and the Falkland Islands although if pressed she could say <sup>that</sup> of course the scope, accuracy and timeliness of intelligence is always kept under review as a matter of routine.

3. On the other hand, she will no doubt want to knock the stories that have been appearing in the Press. I attach a form of words which she could use for this purpose in answer to supplementary questions.

RTA

Robert Armstrong

6th April 1982

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For reasons which the House will understand I must be very careful about what I say about what intelligence may or may not have been available to us - and I certainly have no intention of commenting in any way on intelligence methods. I must say, however, that most of the stories appearing in the Press are without foundation. There is no truth in reports that we knew weeks ago that there was to be an invasion of the Falkland Islands. Indeed, although the Argentine media had been taking an increasing bellicose line, we have reason to think that it is unlikely that a decision was taken before 28th or 29th March.