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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

CABINET : THURSDAY 15 APRIL

I have shown the Prime Minister your minute A08082 of 7 April 1982, and she agrees that the Defence Secretary should brief Cabinet in the Cabinet Room at 10.30 am next Thursday and that the briefing should be followed immediately by Cabinet itself.

I am sending a copy of this minute to Mr Omand (Ministry of Defence).

AWJ.

8 April 1982

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Prime Minister

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Ref. A08082

MR WHITMORE

Agree a briefing at 10.30 am
next Thursday in the Cabinet Room,
followed by Cabinet meeting?

Yes not 7.4.

Cabinet: Thursday, 15 April

It was agreed at Cabinet yesterday that there should be a meeting of the Cabinet on Thursday, 15 April. It was also agreed that the Secretary of State for Defence should brief the Cabinet after Easter on the detailed capability of the British task force now on its way to the South Atlantic.

2. We have informed Ministers' offices that there will be a Cabinet on 15 April. At the present moment there is no substantive business for the agenda apart from the Falkland Islands. Parliament reassembles on Monday, 19 April, however, and the new Lord President of the Council might wish to confirm the business of the House for the forthcoming week. We could therefore also include a Parliamentary Affairs item.

3. Since Ministers will be returning early from their Easter break to attend the Cabinet on 15 April, I think there is good reason for arranging the briefing by the Secretary of State for Defence to take place in the Cabinet Room either before or after - I think preferably before - that Cabinet. By 15 April, the task force will be well on its way to the Falkland Islands and OD(SA) will have had a number of meetings to discuss contingency plans for action after its arrival. The only alternative to the Secretary of State for Defence briefing his colleagues before or after Cabinet on 15 April would be to arrange a special briefing session in the Ministry of Defence itself similar to that which was organised about the Trident programme. This would require Ministers to make themselves available for a second meeting at a time when they might otherwise not have been in London; and a special event such as that in the Ministry of Defence would, in the present climate, run the risk of attracting unwelcome press and public attention.

4. I should be grateful, therefore, if you could consult the Prime Minister about this and let me know whether she would like Mr Nott's briefing to take place before the Cabinet meeting next Thursday, 15 April. The briefing might then be at 10.30 am, to be followed immediately by the Cabinet.

Approved not

5. I am sending a copy of this minute to Mr Omand in the Ministry of Defence.

REA

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

7 April 1982

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