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C.A. Whitmore, Esq.



CABINET OFFICE

With the compliments of
Sir Robert Armstrong KCB, CVO
Secretary of the Cabinet

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SECRET



GM to Mr Ingham...

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Prime Minister

To see

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From the Secretary of the Cabinet: Sir Robert Armstrong KCB CVO

Ref. A08199

23rd April, 1982

Handwritten scribble

The Sunday Times published on 18th April three articles about the intelligence cover available in support of the operations of the naval Task Force in the South Atlantic. These articles contained statements some of which were remarkably accurate. They related both to the substance of intelligence reporting and to the methods by which intelligence is collected.

These articles could not have been put together solely by intelligent journalists speculating on the situation. The authors must at the least have had the opportunity to put searching questions to officials and have received replies which were more forthcoming than they should have been.

The damage caused by articles such as these is well known to all of us. In so far as substance is concerned, they enable the Argentines to speculate knowledgably about our intentions and possibly to take deceptive measures themselves. In so far as methods are concerned the damage to our capabilities, though possibly not immediate, is likely to be widespread and long-lasting.

I should be grateful if all those to whom I am sending copies of this letter would ensure that those dealing with the press throughout their organisations - including people who were in the Falkland Islands at the time of the invasion - are most firmly instructed to deal with all questions on intelligence matters in the only approved manner: that is, by refusing to comment.

I am sending copies of this letter to Frank Cooper, Terry Lewin, Nicko Henderson, Clive Whitmore and Robert Wade-Gery, and also, for information, to Michael Palliser, Patrick Wright and Tony Duff.

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

Sir Antony Acland, KCVO, CMG

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