

Mr Whitke



10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Press Secretary*

13 May 1982

*Mr Neville,*

I am sending you the attached correspondence on a personal and confidential basis. You may well have seen Nicholson's report. If not it may help you to move things along.

I have replied as attached to David Nicholas.

Best wishes.

*B. Ingham*

B. INGHAM

Neville Taylor, Esq.,  
Director of Public Relations,  
Ministry of Defence.





10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Press Secretary*

13 May 1982

*Dear David,*

Many thanks for your letter of May 11 enclosing an internal service message from Michael Nicholson with the Task Force.

I am convinced that Neville Taylor, the new Director of Public Relations at the MoD, will do his level best to improve matters. But he needs to be given time, bearing in mind the impossible circumstances he discovered on arrival in the Department soon after the crisis arose.

We were well aware of the film problem of the Argentine prisoners and we have tried to ensure that the UK has the first film. A number of us will be very disappointed and upset if that has not occurred.

As you may know Peter Woon was on to me earlier today over the latest difficulties. I made exactly the same point to him as I have made to you above - namely that you do have a friend in Neville Taylor, but he has to be given time to work. I know your problems and your frustrations, but I am bound to say that I think if you overplay your hand you will be playing into the hands of those who really have no time for any journalist who comes within 8,000 miles of the Fleet.

*Yours sincerely*  
*B. Ingham*

B. INGHAM

David Nicholas, Esq.,  
Editor,  
Independent Television News Limited.



FROM THE EDITOR

Mr Bernard Ingham  
Press Office  
10 Downing Street  
London SW1

11 May 1982

*Dear Bernard,*

Just to illustrate the problems involved in reporting from the Task Force, I thought you would be interested to see an internal service message received at ITN this morning from Michael Nicholson.

I repeat we are receptive to any vetting system at this end to scrutinise sensitive material as long as we can keep a constant flow coming in. I have reminded the Ministry of Defence that Nicholson is a highly experienced war correspondent and has covered fourteen wars these last twenty years: so he knows what it is all about.

On the matter of the Argentine prisoners taken at South Georgia: the latest news is that they arrive in Buenos Aires tomorrow, no doubt to extensive Argentine television coverage. But to the best of my knowledge there will not be a single picture of them in British hands either at the Georgia end or on Ascension. It seems to me a major trump has been lost here.

Thanks for past help these difficult weeks.

*Yours ever,*

*David*  
David Nicholas

enc.



MEMORANDUM

TO : THE EDITOR, cc FOREIGN DESK

FROM : MICHAEL NICHOLSON ex "Hermes", phoned in on Tuesday 11 May 1982  
at 1030 BST

SUBJECT : LATEST INCIDENTS IN THE LONG RUN OF COMPLAINTS.

1. We were told this morning by Admiral staff aboard Hermes that there were no incidents to report overnight -- poor visibility, and there had been no activity in the air. Minutes afterwards, we heard on the BBC World Service the MOD spokesman in London announcing surface engagements off the Falklands, and that the Task Force had fired on a vessel.
2. Having got to this ship to radio-phone on Sunday, we have been stranded here since Sunday with familiar excuses on why we cannot have a helicopter.
3. The MOD in London is mishearing information from our stories and misreporting it back to the Task Force. For example, I was accused by Rear Admiral Woodward of reporting to ITN that there would be a further naval bombardment last night. MOD complaint to Admiral quoted NAO report. I said nothing of the kind. Hanrahan of the BBC was accused of quoting survivors ex-"NAWAL" having been strafed by Harriers. He said no such thing.
4. Bad news stories strictly embargoed from MOD London and released by MOD without telling us. For example, we were not allowed to report the 'Sheffield' attack or the loss of the 3 Sea Harriers.
5. There are frequent attempts by MOD London to direct the activities of the press on board. For example, we were not allowed to interview survivors of 'Sheffield', and we could only interview the Captain of 'Sheffield' after he had been briefed by MOD.
6. We were not allowed to film or photograph 'Sheffield' until 4 days after she had been hit, and we were told on the day of the attack that there was no room in helicopters for operational reasons, even though we witnessed helicopters leaving 'Hermes' with one small fire-pump aboard, and returning empty. Also, we were only allowed to film on condition that both pool film/ENG and P.A.'s negatives be held by the MOD rep aboard for future release. It is not our property.
7. Every story we write is censored at 2 levels -- Admiral staff and MOD-PR aboard.
8. Since the arrival of ITN equipment, I am told by 'Hermes' technical people that Scott satellite transmission is technically possible even



ough only black and white. However, MOD have refused permission.

9. A VHF radio transmission between 'Hermes' and this radio/marifat ship is also possible, which would mean we need never leave 'Hermes' but could be patched through, enabling us to talk directly to London ex-'Hermes' and for London to talk directly to us whenever they wished. Enormous advantages, but navy here insists it is not operationally possible, in contradiction to other sources who say that it is. Navy say VHF link not secure line, but whatever we report over that line is due to be broadcast world-wide anyway.

Michael.

ENDS



The Birmingham Post

Tuesday, May 11, 1982

