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Review



01-233 7292

16 April 1982

Jf 126

R J Carrick Esq MVO
British Embassy
Washington

Jean R...
WATER UNDER THE BRIDGE

I think I probably owe you and Chris Crabbie - apart from others in London - an apology for some confusion which resulted in Washington telegram No. 1303.

2. What happened was this. Just as I was going home last night, Robert Wade-Gery shewed me the minutes of a ministerial meeting, one outcome of which had been Mr Nott's message to Mr Haig. Being slow-witted, I did not react to it at the time. However, on my way home, I realised that I was being niggled by the thought that if Mr Haig took immediate action on Mr Nott's message, without reference to his own staff and possibly without remembering where the intelligence had come from, there was a risk that he would talk about Argentine submarine movements and this in turn would have carried a real danger of further prejudice to our intelligence sources.

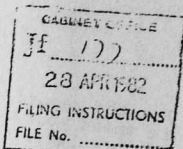
3. Accordingly, when I got home, I telephoned Robert Wade-Gery and asked him to telephone the GCHQ duty officer on the secure line with a message from me. My message (which of course having previously discussed the matter with Robert I was able to put to him securely) was that Mr Nott's message had been sent to Mr Haig and that I thought it important that GCHQ should speak to NSA and should suggest to NSA that they should draw the attention of Mr Haig's entourage to the fact that the intelligence referred to was Sigint.

4. Where, along the line, this message became garbled, as regards both content and destination, I cannot tell, nor does it matter. But I thought I owed you an explanation. Perhaps the headline on the enclosed extract from today's New Statesman sums it up correctly?
No answer to this - I am not all that busy but everyone else is, including you.

Yours ever,
(Signature)
ANTHONY DUFE

Copy to: P R H Wright Esq CMG

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21 April 1982

The Rt Hon Sir A Duff GCMG CVO DSO DSC
Cabinet Office

Dear Tony

WATER UNDER THE BRIDGE

1. It was very good of you to write your Jt 126 of 16 April. Thank you very much for the letter and for the description of the background. I have shown your letter to Chris Crabbie who kindly picked up the ball when both Stephen Comersall and I were out of the Embassy.
2. On 20 April, I had a word on the secure telephone with Bill Savage about one aspect of this. I think we are both concerned that there remains a risk, despite Mr Nott's message to Mr Haig having been very clearly marked with the appropriate classification and codeword preceded by "UK", that Mr Haig passed the content of the message on to the Argentines in such a way as to make them suspect that we had intercepted the orders to the San Luis submarine. Speculating from ignorance, I suppose it is also possible that the Argentines, knowing that the allegation in its particular form (the present tense) was inaccurate, may have thought it was an attempt at misinforming Mr Haig - though if they considered that for any length of time they must have realised how inept it would have been. Though in conversation with Bill Savage I offered to try to find out at working level the precise terms of Mr Haig's message to the Argentines, I also mentioned some of the obvious disadvantages and risks in this (the information probably exists only in Mr Haig's own office), and Bill Savage and I agreed that such action would probably be counter-productive. So the nagging doubt will probably have to remain.

3. For the record, Chris Crabbie spoke to Mr Haig's office to try to speed your message on its way on 15 April, and was telephoned back later to be told that Mr Haig had already sent off his message to the Argentines.

4. Thank you for the extract from the New Statesman. It is sad to see how the sport of inaccurate leaking is taking hold in the UK - the Gulf Stream has a lot to answer for - but at least you must be pleased by the Duff photograph.

Yours ever

Roger

R J Carrick