

FC 3164 CONFIDENTIAL

UK EYE B.



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Permanent Under Secretary of State

PSO/CDS

MEETING WITH EDITORS

Before this evening's meeting with Editors, CDS ought to be aware of the assistance being given us by the BBC and ITV at Park 6 in the attached minute. There have also been a number of useful tips from correspondents orally. This should not, of course, be mentioned.

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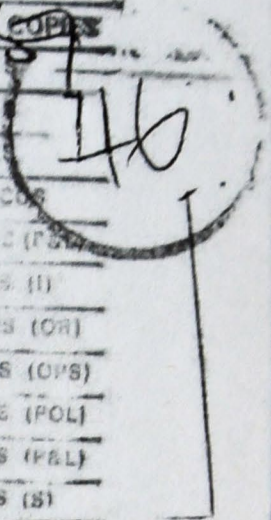
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12 May.

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LOOSE MINUTE

PUS DIST (12.5.82)

PSO/CDS

D/DIS(CS)7/10

PS/PUS

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MEETING WITH EDITORS ON FALKLANDS

1. You asked (your SW/82/592 9/31/F of 19 April) for examples of Argentinian disinformation.
2. We have examined the video films of recent BBC and ITV transmissions now held in the DIS but have not been able to pinpoint evidence of such disinformation. Indeed, when unsubstantiated facts have been used, the TV commentaries have by and large been drawing attention to the source as being Argentinian, although of course the 'small print' spoken caveats on reliability may well not stand out on TV as clearly as they do when read in the press.
3. There is one example where the BBC could perhaps have qualified the source of their information rather more precisely as having been claimed by the Argentinians. This was their report about the claim that Argentine patrol boats had arrived at Port Stanley. A verbatim record of the commentary is attached from which the qualification about the source was not very heavily underlined.
4. It seems to us in the DIS that both networks have been exercising care in their descriptions of what they show but inevitably, as they possess so little footage, the same shots reappear to illustrate later reports. How far the television authorities should be reporting such Argentinian claims at all is of course another issue, but here one is into the realm of editorial judgment of 'news'.
5. It is undoubtedly true that our Defence Attaches in various South American countries are being subjected to a great deal of rumour and possible deliberate disinformation. An example has been the repeated reporting of the presence of Mirage aircraft at Port Stanley airfield. It might therefore be prudent (if not already done) to warn editors that they can expect such approaches to be made also to their correspondents in South America.
6. In this connection, PUS should, however, be aware that the BBC and ITV have both been magnificent in the support they have given to the DIS in the past few weeks. They have made available to us not only tapes of their transmissions but also much additional material which they have not used in their programmes but which have contained valuable items of military significance to our intelligence analysts. It would be most unfortunate if this unofficial (and free) arrangement were to be put at risk by too strong an accusation of the media being duped by the Argentinians.

7. On another subject, we hope that the editors can be dissuaded from going too deeply into UK's arrangements for intelligence cooperation with other countries. PUS is aware of the sensitivity of this subject.

20 Apr 82

*[Handwritten Signature]*  
J S Roycroft, AD DI(AG)



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Your reference

Our reference

D/ DI51e/ 242/ 1

Date

20 April 1982

## TRANSCRIPT OF COMMENTARY FROM BBC "NEWSPRING" 16th APRIL 1982

"The Argentine ships, the carrier, the cruiser, one or two escorts and some submarines are heading south. The British say they doubt these ships will move into the 200 mile blockade zone. 'The Argentines know our resolve and our capability' said the Ministry of Defence. The Zone is patrolled, we assume though no-one confirms it, by two or more British submarines, but today intriguingly an American newspaper quoted Pentagon Officials as saying that till yesterday Britain had no submarines off the Falklands, which, if it is right, means Britain was bluffing from the time the Zone was declared on Monday until yesterday.

It's interesting in this connection that it was only yesterday that the Ministry of Defence began saying with absolute certainty that they knew there were no major Argentine warships inside the zone, which of course may be just coincidence. Now the reason the British now talk of no <sup>major</sup> warships inside the Zone ~~may be because~~ they are now aware of the presence of one or two small Argentine patrol boats in and around the harbour of Port Stanley ~~and reports and pictures from Argentina have been boasting of this successful beating of the blockade for days.~~ The fact is that in the fairly shallow coastal waters of the Falklands where the patrol boats are now thought to be operating, Britain's nuclear submarines would be reluctant to engage them and their torpedoes might be ineffective against such small draught vessels anyway.

Also revealed today is the news that the airport runway at Port Stanley has

not yet been extended. Two RAF Technicians who were helping maintain the airport through the first ten days of the Argentine occupation are now back in Britain and have given this and other valuable information to the Ministry of Defence. This means that the Argentines would still find it hard to operate major combat aircraft off this runway, for example like their Mirage V fighter bombers, these couldn't be operated out of Port Stanley at the moment and will be welcome news for the approaching British Fleet"

NB This is strictly verbatim, from a videorecording. The English is notably ungrammatical in places. The punctuation is ours, as seems appropriate.

C D Reid

DI 51e