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28th April 1982

Dear John.

Thank you for your letter of earlier today about our exchange in the House yesterday on the number of ships in the task force that "will be scrapped two years from now".

I stand by what I said. Of the ships you refer to in your letter, three (DIDO, BACCHANTE and RHYL) are not even with the Task Force. So far as HERMES is concerned, we had already announced our decision to run her on until 1985 on 23rd February, well before the invasion of the Falklands took place. Denzil Davies appeared also to have forgotten this, as Peter Blaker reminded him later in question time. Similarly, we announced on 8th March that both FEARLESS and INTREPID were to be run on. Finally, we had already said that the future of HMS ENDURANCE was under consideration, and Peter Blaker made the same point in answer to Alan Beith yesterday.

Yours sincerely  
John.

John Nott