

Covering SECRET UK EYES A

Reference DN/1716/DPBC

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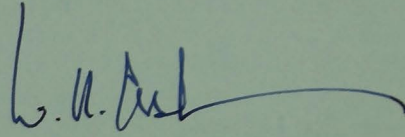
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BBC FALKLANDS SPECIAL PROGRAMME

Your loose minute DRK/82/1036 of 6 July.
I enclose a brief for the meeting with
Sir Ian Trethowan.



Jul 82

Sec DPBC

rca(4)

Encl

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On call for 6.00 pm. He also got
some idea of Puthouse's line to the
ACDC over lunch today.

BRIEF FOR POSSIBLE MEETING BETWEEN SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG, SIR FRANK COOPER AND SIR IAN TRETHOWAN (BBC)

1. Sir Robert Armstrong is writing to Sir Ian Trethowan to offer an opportunity for discussion on the BBC's approach to broadcasts on intelligence matters, following the transmission of the "Falklands Special" programme on 15 June. If the meeting takes place, it will be concerned with two matters:
 - a. The unsatisfactory nature of the "Falklands Special" programme and, possibly, of a Newsnight programme on 18 June. A note on these is attached at Annex A.
 - b. The increasing tendency of BBC programmes to regard the specifics of intelligence collection as fair game for comment and speculation.
2. Until comparatively recently, press stories concerned with the organisation and practice of current UK intelligence have largely been confined to the radical press where, even if harmful in themselves, they at least did not receive a wide circulation. In the last year or two, however, the practice of writing in detail on intelligence matters, and particularly about the methods of intelligence collection, has spread more widely to the national press and broadcasting organisations, especially those with a tradition of "investigative journalism".
3. Some of this material, although regarded with concern by the intelligence agencies, could reasonably be argued by the media as being "in the public interest" and much of it, although it flies close to doing so, cannot be regarded as breaching D Notice No 6 as at present drawn. But the general effect of this degree of exposure is undeniably injurious to national security and to the successful collection and processing of intelligence, if only by the sheer weight of repetition and wide circulation.
4. The BBC has been in the forefront of this publicity. In March 1980 they ran a series of programmes on "The Profession of Intelligence" on Radio 4, and in February/March 1981, two Panorama programmes concentrated on the subject. In addition, they gave extensive coverage, with considerable background detail, on both TV and radio to the New Statesman campaign on telephone tapping (Early 1980), Little Sai Wan (May/June 1980) and Menwith Hill (July 1980), and they do not miss an opportunity to return to the subject when there is occasion to do so.
5. Their coverage of intelligence matters in the Falkland Islands operations is of course the culmination - so far; though in the last 12 months I have received occasional indications that other "set piece" programmes were in producers' minds, even if none has taken shape that I know of.
6. The meeting will I believe wish to put these considerations to Sir Ian Trethowan and seek the co-operation of the BBC in exercising greater restraint on the discussion of intelligence subjects on the air.
7. A difficulty lies in the extent to which editors, most of whom will understand and support the need to protect this information, are in a position effectively to control their journalists, producers, etc, particularly in very large organisations such as the BBC. Also, the motives of journalists in writing about intelligence vary. Some of these are less than reputable, but with the vast majority they are the product of a mixture of scepticism and ignorance about the harm that publicity on the subject can do.

8. The need is to convince these people that this is indeed the case. D Notices can play a part in this. It is known, for instance, that the new D Notices are widely promulgated in the BBC at the level of those responsible for producing programmes. But the new D Notice No 6 is still not well designed for this purpose: it is still based on the premise that any reference to intelligence matters is undesirable, and is of course seriously inhibited by the non-avowal policy. With the degree of exposure in the media that the subject has already received in this country, and even more in the US, this is just not credible to journalists. It needs to be re-drawn to indicate more fully what is and what is not tolerable, and to explain why.

- a. Reference to unofficial arrangements for daily sharing of Chilean intelligence, including radar observations (D Notice No 6, para 2(a) and (b)).
- b. Speculation that the ex-armed Sec King had an intelligence gathering role and associated discussion on capabilities (D Notices No 1 para 2(a), and No 5 para 2(b)). Reference to the Type 320 variable radar would also be covered by D Notice No 2.
- c. References to small ship operations in Chilean waters (D Notices No 1 para 2(e) and No 6 para 2(a)).

In addition, the whole approach adopted by this section of the programme transcended the repeated requests by PBS at his editors' meetings for discretion in references to "third countries" and the direct requests by Sec IPBC to the BBC (and others) to lay off Chile.

3. Whether GCEQ's very valid points on the resulting general and particular weakening of communications security assurances both in Argentina and elsewhere are adequately covered by the last sentence of para 1 of D Notice No 6 (they certainly are not elsewhere) is, I think, at least open to question; as to the applicability of para 2 to Harford, I doubt too whether the UK's relationship with the US in intelligence matters can be considered as protected by the present (or the previous) D Notices.

There are, I believe, instances of the need for further thought on this D Notice.

SEC NIGHTTIME PROGRAMME 18 JUNE 1982

5. 'G' refers to this programme in his letter of 29 June. The general tenor of it is indicated in the attached copy of an article of the Listener of 24 June. I have side-lined the "intelligence" passages. Much of it is clearly the product of EE official leakage and severely D-notifiable, though the method and content are indeed to be deplored; but the passages double-sidedlined are breaches of D Notice No 6 (and to my sorry regret included in the broadcast version).

BBC "FALKLANDS SPECIAL" PROGRAMME 15 JUNE 1982

1. A description of this programme and an assessment of the damage it could have done are contained in the Director GCHQ's letter D/3738DQ/1605/14 dated 28 Jun 82. PUS will no doubt wish to draw on this in the discussions with Sir Ian Trethowan.
2. From the D Notice point-of-view, though I doubt if PUS will wish to be specific on this, there were clear breaches of D Notices in:
 - a. Reference to unofficial arrangements for daily sharing of Chilean intelligence, including radar observations (D Notice No 6, paras 2(a) and (b)).
 - b. Speculation that the crashed Sea King had an intelligence gathering role and associated discussion on capabilities (D Notices No 1 para 2(e), and No 6 para 2(b)). Reference to the Type 320 portable radar would also be covered by D Notice No 2.
 - c. References to small ship operations in Chilean waters (D Notices No 1 para 2(e) and No 6 para 2(a)).

In addition, the whole approach adopted by this section of the programme transgressed the repeated requests by PUS at his editors' meetings for discretion in references to "third countries" and the direct requests by Sec DPBC to the BBC (and others) to lay off Chile.

3. Whether GCHQ's very valid points on the resulting general and particular heightening of communications security awareness both in Argentina and elsewhere are adequately covered by the last sentence of para 1 of D Notice No 6 (they certainly are not elsewhere) is, I think, at least open to question; as is the applicability of para 3 to Bamford. I doubt too whether the UK's relationship with the US in intelligence matters can be considered as protected by the present (or the previous) D Notices.
4. These are, I believe, instances of the need for further thought on this D Notice.

BBC NEWSNIGHT PROGRAMME 18 JUNE 1982

5. 'C' refers to this programme in his letter of 29 June. The general tenor of it is indicated in the attached copy of an article of the Listener of 24 June. I have side-lined the "intelligence" passages. Much of it is clearly the product of US official leakage and scarcely D-noticeable, though the method and content are indeed to be deplored; but the passages double-sidelined are breaches of D Notice No 6 (and to my memory were included in the broadcast version).

The Listener 24 June 1982

THE LISTENER 24 JUNE 1982

Robert Harris: The Falklands inquest

The key to the mystery of the Government's failure to act sooner

Robert Harris has spent two months investigating the story of the run-up to the invasion of the Falklands for BBC2's *Newsnight*. Here he chronicles the many warnings given to London by intelligence sources both British and American.

When eventually they make the film of the Falklands War—with Sarah Hogg no doubt playing Mrs Thatcher, George C. Scott playing General Galtieri, and Ronald Reagan as himself—there will be a fine opening sequence to be shot at the annual Army versus Navy American football game held in 1981 in Philadelphia. There, last autumn, a sharp-eyed journalist saw the US Army's Chief of Staff, General Edward Meyer, in deep conversation with the head of the Argentine army, General Leopoldo Galtieri.

Though little reported in Britain, Galtieri made two visits to the United States before he became President. The first, in August 1981, is said to have been at the personal invitation of Meyer himself; it was a private affair and we do not know what they discussed. The second, in October, included a lunch with Meyer, Thomas Enders, Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs, and Richard Allen, at that time head of America's National Security Council; afterwards Allen told reporters he found Galtieri 'impressive'.

The purpose of this wooing—which had included a four-day visit to Buenos Aires by UN Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick—was clear enough. Reagan wanted American foreign policy to pay more attention to Latin America, and he wanted help in El Salvador—help which Argentina subsequently gave. What Galtieri believed he got in return was, if not a green, then at least an amber light to attempt the coup which would at a stroke establish him as the new Peron, unite Argentina, and prop up the flagging military junta: the retaking of the Falklands. According to David Luken, a leading US expert on Latin America: 'The United States wanted to appear willing to back Argentine claims on the Malvinas, and didn't want to specifically rule out that they would support some sort of military feint to bring the

negotiations to a head; but they didn't expect Argentina to take the step it did.' Six weeks later Galtieri was sworn in as President of Argentina.

Winston Churchill called the Second World War 'the unnecessary war'; on the day it broke out he declared simply: 'It should never have happened. It could have been stopped. It should have been stopped.'

Most wars look easily avoidable in retrospect, but in the case of the Falklands, which broke out so dramatically less than three months ago, the Government has, uniquely, announced an inquiry to establish just that: whether there was negligence on a scale for which 'gross' is too mild an adjective; whether it was, in the words of Ted Rowlands, a former Falklands Minister at the Foreign Office, 'an unnecessary and an avoidable conflict'.

Certainly, whatever else the Argentine invasion of the Falklands may have been, it should not have been a surprise attack.

In the early Seventies, the Heath government is said to have had to deal with a similar threat to the islands. In 1977, the Labour government dispatched two frigates and a nuclear-powered submarine to deter Argentine aggression. By 1979 there was, in Ted Rowlands' words, 'a long history of crisis management' in this area of British foreign policy.

Against this background, the kindest thing which can be said about the Foreign Office's actions over the nine months leading up to April's invasion is: baffling. As part of the cutbacks in the Royal Navy, and presumably with Foreign Office acquiescence, the Government announced in July last year the removal of HMS *Endurance*, the one obvious sign of our commitment to the islands. At the same time, the FO—despite a staff of 8,000 and a much vaunted 'Rolls-Royce' diplomatic corps—appears to have missed a succession of warning signals of what was happening,

Mrs Thatcher was finally told on Wednesday 31 March, 'that a large number of large ships, including an aircraft-carrier, destroyers, landing-craft, troop-carriers and submarines were heading for Port Stanley.' There was a frantic attempt to head off the invasion at the UN; President Reagan was prevailed upon to telephone Galtieri and ask him to think again. This was probably Galtieri's first real intimation that he'd miscalculated on American—and British—reaction. By then it was

too late to turn the force back, and the decision was out of even his hands.

Could the invasion have been stopped, given the fact that information warning of it had been sitting, neglected, in Whitehall for more than a week? Would a week's notice been enough time to have brought home to the Junta the consequences of its aggression? We put the question to Zbigniew Brzezinski, Carter's head of the National Security Council. 'It should have been,' he said.