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10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

11 May 1982

Dear Cardinal Home,

Thank you for your letter of 8 May, which was also signed by the Archbishop of St Andrews and Edinburgh.

I was surprised that you should question whether our use of force in the South Atlantic was morally justified. It was Argentina who first used force in this dispute, and we cannot allow them to profit from their invasion; that is an important principle, and one which all nations should support. We cannot allow the Islanders' rights and wishes to be denied by Argentina's territorial ambitions; and we are determined to do whatever is necessary to free them from occupation.

It has always been our wish, and it still is our wish, to settle this dispute by negotiation. Our repossession of South Georgia, and the recent military engagements, in no way alter that. These military actions have been intended to support our overall strategy; they have not been and will not become a substitute for it.

Our immediate concern is to implement the resolution passed by the UN Security Council, which called for the withdrawal of Argentine forces, and negotiations on the future, unprejudiced in any way. We are open to any ideas that would achieve this. But so far the Argentines have been intransigent. They have shown no inclination to implement the resolution, and they have rejected the

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proposals based on the Peruvian President's ideas. We accepted these proposals, and if they had, then we could have had a ceasefire in place very quickly.

I hope that your appeal to the Argentines will encourage them to reconsider their position; that they will now show the readiness and desire to achieve a peaceful settlement that only we have shown so far; and that progress can be made with the help of the UN Secretary General. Until then, we will continue to exercise our rights of self defence, including the use of force under Article 51 of the UN Charter, if this proves necessary.

Yours sincerely
Raymond Stedman

His Eminence the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster