



SECRET AND PERSONAL

MR. BUTLER

MS

A.J.C. 9/19.

In the middle of July I sought the Prime Minister's guidance on whether to show to the Franks' Committee a copy of the record of the confidential meeting between Mr. Ridley and the Argentine Deputy Foreign Minister on 10th and 11th September 1980.

2. I indicated that there were references to the meeting in other papers which had been given to the Franks Committee and said that I thought we should not seek to suppress the record. I suggested that we should show it to Lord Franks, emphasising its confidential nature, but leaving it to his discretion whether he should show it to other members of his Committee. The Prime Minister agreed that the document should be shown in the first instance only to Lord Franks himself; she hoped that he might feel that it was not really necessary for other members of his Committee to see it.

3. She subsequently agreed that we could not in the end fetter Lord Franks's discretion to show it to other members of the Committee if he thought it necessary; but we should stress the secret nature of the document.

4. I communicated the document accordingly to Lord Franks. He came to the conclusion that the Committee as a whole should be aware of the note, but he fully recognised its sensitivity: he noted that no hint of the meeting had ever been given by the Argentine Government, and that the meeting had been held on the basis that complete secrecy was essential and that the fact that the meeting had taken place should never become public knowledge. Accordingly he undertook to make special arrangements for the security of the record. He would see that it was not copied, and that the meeting was not referred to in the Committee's Report.

5. I have mentioned this to Mr. Ridley, who is entirely content.

Robert Armstrong

8th September 1982

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