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cc Mr Coles

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Principal Private Secretary*

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

THE FRANKS REPORT

Further to my minute of yesterday, I should let you know that Sir Tom McCaffrey telephoned me this morning, making two points:-

- i) He asked whether the Leader of the Opposition would be given advance access to the report. I said that the Prime Minister proposed that he should, probably on the morning of publication. Sir Tom took note of this, merely commenting that Mr Foot would like as long notice as possible.
- ii) Sir Tom asked whether it was the Prime Minister's intention to consult Mr Foot about deletions to be made from the report on security grounds. I said that it was the Prime Minister's wish to amend the report as little as possible, and only to the extent which was necessary to protect an intelligence source. The amendments would be agreed with Lord Franks. I said that I thought that the Prime Minister would be willing to give Mr Foot access to the report in its original form if necessary, but, provided that the amendments were as limited as I had described, I wondered whether Mr Foot would think it necessary. Sir Tom thought that if he put the point to Mr Foot, Mr Foot would probably prefer to see the report in its original form, and we agreed that he should not do so until I had spoken to Sir Tom again when I knew more about the amendments likely to be made. Sir Tom said that he would be going on holiday for two weeks from tomorrow (Thursday) evening and that it would be very helpful if I could speak to him again before then. Could we have a word before tomorrow evening about what I might say to Sir Tom on this point ?

Checking our papers, I find that it is our custom to distribute statements in advance to the Liberals, the SDP, the Leader of the Ulster Unionists and (if the statement applies to Scotland) the Leader of the Scottish National Party. I also find

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that the leaders of these parties were consulted by the Prime Minister before she set up the Franks inquiry. This would point to making the Franks report available on the morning of publication to Mr Molyneaux (or Mr Powell if it is thought preferable to keep the matter on a Privy Counsellor basis) and to Mr Donald Stewart as well as to Mr Foot, Mr Steel and Dr Owen. Do you agree that we should recommend this to the Prime Minister?

F.R.B.

5 January 1983