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From the Secretary of the Cabinet: Sir Robert Armstrong KCB, CVO

Ref: A083/0134

14th January 1983

The Prime Minister has approved the outline of her speech opening the debate on the Franks Report, as attached to my letter of 10th January to you and my minute of 12th January to Mr. Scholar, as a basis for the preparation of material.

I am sorry to set tight deadlines but I should be grateful if the material could be with my office by close of play on Tuesday, 18th January.

I attach a copy of a revised version of the draft statement to be made on the publication of the Report.

I am sending copies of this letter to Clive Whitmore, Tony Duff, 'C', Brian Tovey, Robin Butler and Tony Rawsthorne.

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

Sir Antony Acland, KCMG, KCVO

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Mr. Coler A.S.C. 12/1  
Mr. Rickett



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With the compliments of  
Sir Robert Armstrong KCB, CVO  
*Secretary of the Cabinet*

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Falkland Islands Review Committee

Statement by the Prime Minister

With permission, Mr. Speaker, I will make a statement about the report of the Falkland Islands Review Committee.

2. The House will remember that I announced the setting up of the review committee in July 1982, after consultation with the rt hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition and leading Privy Counsellors in other parties. At that time I expressed the hope that the Committee would be able to complete its work within six months.

3. The Committee has justified that hope. I received its report on 31st December 1982, and I am presenting it to Parliament as a Command paper this afternoon. Copies <sup>are</sup> ~~will~~ be available in the Vote Office [at the end of proceedings on this statement].

4. I should like to express the Government's admiration and gratitude to the rt. hon and noble Lord, Lord Franks, and to his rt. hon colleagues for the amount of time and effort which they have devoted to producing such a thorough and comprehensive report in so short a time.

5. The report makes it clear that the Committee was provided with all the papers relevant to its terms of reference, including a comprehensive collection of reports from the intelligence agencies. The Committee's report contains a considerable number of references to intelligence matters which would not in other circumstances be divulged. These references are essential for a full understanding of the matters into which the Committee was asked to inquire, and the Government has agreed that the public interest requires that on this unique occasion the normal rule against public references to the intelligence organisation or to material derived from intelligence reports should be waived. The Government has, however,

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agreed with the rt. hon and noble Lord, Lord Franks, amendments to certain of the references to intelligence reports with a view to minimising potential damage to British intelligence interests. Lord Franks has authorised me to tell the House that he agrees that:

(1) all the references to intelligence reports included in the Committee's report as submitted have been retained in the report as presented to Parliament, most of them without amendment;

(2) none of the amendments that have been made alters the sense, substance or emphasis of the reference to the intelligence report concerned, or removes anything of significance to the Committee's account of the matters referred to it or to its findings and conclusions;

(3) apart from those agreed amendments, no other deletions or amendments have been made to the Committee's report as submitted.

6. The report is unanimous and is signed by all the members of the Committee without qualification. It falls into four chapters. The first gives an account of the dispute from 1965, when the issue was first brought formally to international attention by a Resolution of the General Assembly of the United Nations, to May 1979. The second covers the period from May 1979 to 19th March 1982. The third deals with the fortnight from 19th March to 2nd April 1982 which included the South Georgia incident and led up to the Argentine invasion of the Falkland Islands. The fourth and final chapter deals with the way in which the Government discharged its responsibilities in the period leading up to the invasion. There are six annexes, the first of which comments on a number of specific assertions made by people who have spoken or written on the matters in question.

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7. In the fourth chapter of the report the Committee notes a number of points where in its judgment different decisions might have been taken, fuller consideration of alternative courses of action might have been advantageous and the machinery of Government could have been better used. This chapter defines and addresses itself to two crucial questions:

(1) Could the Government have foreseen the invasion of 2nd April 1982?

(2) Could the Government have prevented the invasion?

8. The Committee emphasises that its report should be read as a whole. At this stage, therefore, I will do no more than quote the words in which the Committee sums up its conclusions on these two crucial questions.

9. On the first question, whether the Government could have foreseen the invasion of 2nd April, the Committee's conclusion is as follows:

"266. In the light of this evidence, we are satisfied that the Government did not have warning of the decision to invade. The evidence of the timing of the decision taken by the Junta shows that the Government not only did not, but could not, have had earlier warning. The invasion of the Falkland Islands on 2nd April could not have been foreseen."

I have quoted the whole of paragraph 266.

10. On the second question, whether the Government could have prevented the invasion, the Committee's conclusion is as follows:

"339. Against this background we have pointed out in this Chapter where different decisions might have been taken, where fuller consideration of alternative courses of action might, in our opinion, have been advantageous, and where the machinery of Government could have been better used. But, if the British Government had acted differently in the ways we have

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indicated, it is impossible to judge what the impact on the Argentine Government or the implications for the course of events might have been. There is no reasonable basis for any suggestion - which would be purely hypothetical - that the invasion would have been prevented if the Government had acted in the ways indicated in our report. Taking account of these considerations, and of all the evidence we have received, we conclude that we would not be justified in attaching any criticism or blame to the present Government for the Argentine Junta's decision to commit its act of unprovoked aggression in the invasion of the Falkland Islands on 2nd April 1982."

I have quoted in toto the final paragraph of the report.

11. Mr. Speaker, rt. hon and hon Members of the House will wish to read the report in full before it is debated. Time will of course be found for an early debate, and that matter will be discussed through the usual channels. That debate will provide us with an opportunity to deal more fully than is possible in this statement with the issues covered by the Committee's report.

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*Angus*



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C A WHITMORE CVO

PUS 83/52  
9/31/F

*I have caused this page to be amended in the PM's brief to include the sentence below.*  
17 January 1983  
*Dear Robin,*  
*TERB*

*17.1.83*

In his minute of 14 January to you Robert Armstrong suggested that if I had any further comments on the list of observations attached to his minute, I should let you have them direct.

I should like to suggest the addition of the following sentence at the end of the second paragraph of the answers to the observations at A18:-

"There was also the risk that the despatch of a force, if it became known, would prejudice the efforts to find a diplomatic solution and provoke the very action it was designed to deter".

This point is of course made elsewhere in the commentary (eg A9), but I think that it is also needed here for the sake of completeness.

I am sending copies of this letter to Robert Armstrong, Antony Acland and Bernard Ingham.

*Yours sincerely,*

*Chris Whitmore.*

Robin Butler Esq

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MINISTERIO DE ECONOMIA Y FINANZAS  
SECRETARÍA DE ECONOMÍA Y FINANZAS



ESTADO PLURINACIONAL DE LOS ARGENTINOS

*[Faint handwritten text, possibly a signature or address]*

117 JAN 1983

