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cc Sir A Parsons

NOTE FOR THE RECORD

FRANKS COMMITTEE

Lord Franks called on the Prime Minister at 11.00 am today.

The Prime Minister thanked Lord Franks warmly for the work which he and his committee had done. She said that she would write individually to members of the committee and Lord Franks encouraged this suggestion.

Lord Franks drew the Prime Minister's attention to the fact that the last sentence of the report was carefully drafted to refer to the Argentine junta's decision to invade the Falkland Islands on 2 April. He emphasised that the conclusion was directly related to that decision, and the committee had reached no conclusion about what their judgment would have been in relation to an invasion at some other time.

Lord Franks said that the members of the committee had agreed that no one would speak about the proceedings of the committee at least until after the debate and probably not ever. He himself would not speak in the Parliamentary debate, and he believed no other members of the committee would do so, except possibly Lord Lever. His own feeling was that those who produced reports should say all that they had to say in the report and then leave others to judge their conclusions.

Lord Franks said that he had been surprised at what the Prime Minister's own papers had not contained. The papers indicated to him a need for matters to be reported to the Prime Minister more acutely and with more vigour. The Prime Minister said that she shared this view and had had it very much in mind in appointing Sir Anthony Parsons and Mr Jackling to her office.

Lord Franks said that he would like to make one other point, emphasising that it did not reflect on any individual.

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The member of the intelligence machinery dealing with South America, Captain Todd, had previously been in charge of a frigate off Belize. He had struck Lord Franks as a very conscientious and hard-working man, but as somebody who was not well equipped with the nuances of the material available to him. He had no experience through which he could judge the inwardness of diplomatic exchanges or of the press reports which he received. Lord Franks had felt that this part of the machinery was somewhat amateur. The Prime Minister suggested that it would be useful if Lord Franks could speak to Sir Robert Armstrong about this matter. Lord Franks said that he doubted whether he could add very much to what he had said, but would gladly talk to Sir Robert Armstrong.

F.R.B.

19 January 1983

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John Coles to see
cc Sir A Parsons

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

I attach a copy of a note of the Prime Minister's discussion with Lord Franks today. I should draw your attention particularly to the last paragraph of it. Lord Franks will, I think, be expecting you to contact him, and I am sure that the Prime Minister will welcome the opportunity to discuss with you the staffing of the Assessment Staff. We will arrange a time in the near future.

R.R.B.

19 January 1983

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