

PRIME MINISTERWESTLAND: DEFENCE SELECT COMMITTEE

As you know Bernard and I have been summoned to appear before the Defence Select Committee. So too have Mr Mogg, Mr Michell and Miss Bow of the DTI.

As you agreed last night, the Permanent Secretary of the DTI has written to the Committee to say that it would not be appropriate for the DTI officials in question to appear and offering to go himself (letter attached).

Meanwhile, the Chief Whip is hoping to reach a solution with the Chairman of the Committee and its Conservative members which would prevent the request for Bernard and me to appear from being further pursued. We shall probably not know the outcome of these efforts until late this evening.

Sir Robert Armstrong has suggested that you yourself should write to the Chairman of the Committee saying that you cannot agree that Bernard and I should appear and has put forward a draft. I have told him that I think that you should write only as a last resort if all else fails: that our first aim must be to dissuade the Committee from insisting on our appearance: and that if this fails, the next step should be for Sir Robert rather than you to write, saying that he has consulted you and that you are opposed to our appearing.

I attach the relevant papers in case this comes to a head tomorrow and action is needed.

CDR

Charles Powell

29 January 1986