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PRIME MINISTER

You may like to know that the following colleagues came in to have a drink with me in your room earlier this week, in two separate parties:

Robert Key  
Richard Holt  
David Harris  
Jeremy Hanley  
Robin Squire  
Kenneth Hind  
Bowen Wells  
Charles Wardle  
Geoff Lawler  
Nick Budgen.



The main topics of interest were:

1. WESTLAND - it was thought that the "ghost" had not yet been laid, and would continue to haunt us for a bit. The most difficult points for colleagues to understand were, first, why nobody at Number 10 had told you more about the leak immediately after you had heard about it; secondly, how it was that Leon Brittan never told you (in advance of RTA's report) that he had authorised the leak. Oddly, Richard Holt (who is right wing) thought that you should have volunteered to give evidence to the Select Committee! He saw the encounter as a gladiatorial one which you would have won decisively.



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2. Geoff Lawler approved of John Biffen's reference to avoiding rhetorical attacks on our opponents. He was worried on behalf of his respectable middle-class folk.
  
3. Several colleagues, particularly Nick Budgen, were worried about the local election prospects, especially as so many Conservatives - who would lose their seats - were (like many Socialists) "hooked" on quite substantial cash flows from their attendance allowances, etc. They would prove to be sour malcontents out of office, and would make life uncomfortable for our marginal colleagues.

Overall, our colleagues were in good heart, and basically unperturbed about the violent, but essentially ephemeral, Westland storm.

Is this little intelligence report of any interest to you, and shall I repeat it when I have entertained a further three groups of colleagues next week?

MA

MICHAEL ALISON  
14.2.86