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From the Private Secretary

23 April 1982

Falkland Islands population

Would you please refer to Robert Armstrong's minute of 22 April? There was some discussion of its contents at a meeting on other matters here this afternoon, at which Sir Antony Acland was present.

The Prime Minister agreed that a statement should be issued on the lines of paragraph 2C of the minute under reference but was concerned that we should not give any impression that we were taking the initiative to encourage the islanders to leave. It might therefore be best if the statement read as follows:

"In view of reports that some Falkland islanders would appreciate guidance on the matter, the Government wish to make it clear that if there are any islanders who would prefer to leave the islands temporarily until the immediate crisis is past, we will give sympathetic help to ensure that they are not prevented from doing so by lack of means."

The Prime Minister also considers that it is desirable to make arrangements for the islanders to receive regular guidance on the general situation. She wondered whether the Governor should make a daily broadcast. Care would have to be taken about the wording of any broadcast but the morale of the islanders could benefit considerably from such an arrangement and the Government might well be criticised if it did nothing in this respect. The Prime Minister would be grateful if this matter could be looked at urgently.

I am sending copies of this letter to John Halliday (Home Office), David Omand (Ministry of Defence), Keith Long (Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster's Office) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

John Holmes, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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