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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

17 May 1982

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CDL  
MOD  
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*Dear Sir,*

The Falkland Islands: Sovereignty

Your letter of 17 May, containing the views of the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary on a remark made by the Secretary of State for Defence to the media over the weekend, was discussed at OD(SA) this morning. It was agreed that, if further explanation of Mr. Nott's remark was necessary, the line should be taken that it was difficult to envisage the Falkland Islands becoming Argentine sovereign territory because it was difficult to believe that the Falkland islanders would wish, especially in the light of their recent experiences, to live under Argentine rule.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Private Secretaries to the other members of OD(SA).

*Yours ever*

*John Holmes.*

John Holmes, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

17 May 1982

Dear John,

The Falkland Islands: Sovereignty

Mr Pym has asked that the following message be passed urgently to the Prime Minister and be copied to OD(SA) colleagues:

'I note from this morning's LPS summary of first editions that John Nott is reported to have said 'No, never' when asked if he ever envisaged the Falkland Islands becoming Argentine sovereign territory. I have no means of knowing whether the quotation is accurate or what was the broader context in which the remarks were made. But, as it stands, the quotation is a gift to the Argentines and to others whom it may suit to argue that we are not serious in our negotiations for a peaceful settlement and that it is we who are prejudging the question of sovereignty. It is of course particularly important that this impression should not be created at a time when Tony Parsons is about to make the very important approach to De Cuellar which we agreed at Chequers on Sunday. I hope that action will be taken urgently to set the record straight and to give Tony (and Nicko Henderson) an appropriate line to take'.

When asked about this, our News Department have so far taken the line that there can be no prejudgement of the final outcome of the negotiations by either side and referred to Mr Pym's remarks in the House on 13 May:

'We accept that negotiations about the future of the Islands can exclude no possible outcome but equally we insist that they must predetermine none. Nothing excluded, nothing prejudged. That is a reasonable position and one on which we shall not compromise'.

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I am copying this letter to the Private Secretaries  
to other members of OD(SA).

*Yours ever*

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'John Holmes'.

(J E Holmes)  
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq  
10 Downing Street

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