



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

16 June 1982

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Dear John,

"Calling the Falklands"

Your letter of 18 May recorded that the Prime Minister was content to delay sending a message to the Falkland Islanders in the BBC's programme "Calling the Falklands" until there was a suitable major development.

With the Argentine surrender, we believe that a message from the Prime Minister to the Islanders soon would be particularly appropriate and valuable. The BBC would like to broadcast a message tonight. Mr Onslow, who has done several broadcasts to keep up the Islanders' morale in past weeks, considers it important that the Prime Minister should broadcast to the Islanders as soon as practicable, if possible tonight. Mr Pym agrees. It seems to us best that the Prime Minister should broadcast to the Islanders on the crest of the present wave before any new problems intrude. The message could also be cast to include our forces.

I enclose a draft which the Prime Minister might care to draw on. If you agree, the BBC could record the message at No 10 at short notice, but it would need to be recorded before 8.30 pm at the latest.

Yours ever

J E Holmes

(J E Holmes)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street

I am glad to be able to speak today to all of you in the Falklands, to rejoice with the Islanders over your newly regained freedom and to congratulate the forces who have done so much to win this precious prize.

To those of you whose homes are in the Falklands, I can say that your welfare has been uppermost in all my waking thoughts these last 10 weeks: I have shared your anguish mentally, even if I have only been able to imagine the physical privations that you have suffered. All of us here have admired your loyalty, resolution and courage; even at the height of the battle for Stanley, you were apparently in good heart. None of this has surprised us; for it is the same spirit of a beleaguered island race which has been displayed here whenever we too faced the invader.

Even now I am appalled at the action of the Argentine government in invading your islands. Fundamentally, I think it was because they did not fully understand the depth of your, and our, democratic convictions. They were prepared to override your democratic rights. They also totally misjudged the strength and vitality of democratic forces in Great Britain. On 3 April the House of Commons here at once resolved that your freedom must be restored; I told the House then that you had a right to live in peace and to choose your own way of life and determine your own allegiance; I said then "It is the wish of the British people and the duty of Her Majesty's Government to do everything that we can to uphold that right". And it was to the House of Commons that I first reported yesterday how we had accomplished that duty. Never in a generation have our people been so united as in demanding the restoration of your rights, regardless of the immense difficulties of the task.

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That we succeeded, we owe to the immense courage, skill and professionalism of our forces. To them I say the challenge was often daunting, but you rose to it magnificently. Again, that does not surprise us: you did no more than live up to the high standards and traditions of the forces of the Crown.

There has been a heavy price to pay, in the lives of some of our finest young men and in some - thankfully very few - tragic casualties among the Islanders. But if their sacrifice secures a free future for the population of the Islands, it will not have been in vain.

Recent events have been a triumph for democracy over the forces of oppression in more ways than one. Yesterday, the Commonwealth Secretary General, speaking for nearly a third of the countries of the world, said that "Britain's response in this instance has been a service to the world community". ". . . aggression in any part of the world", he added, "is a crime against the whole world". Indeed in all our efforts we have been deeply thankful for the support of the United States our partners in the EC and the Commonwealth, and indeed of all who value freedom in the world.

But I know that there is now a further tremendous task ahead of us all, to restore your normal peaceable existence, to rebuild the prosperity of your islands and to make proper arrangements for your future security and administration. In this, you will all need time to settle down again, to collect your thoughts and to consider what is best for the long term future of the Islands and your families. But I can assure you here and now, that in the future, as in the recent dramatic events, you will be able to count on the support of the British people.