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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

29 November 1982

FALKLAND ISLANDS WHITE PAPER

The Prime Minister saw over the weekend your Secretary of State's minute of 26 November and the draft White Paper which he enclosed.

As I told you on the telephone this morning, the Prime Minister has no objection to the circulation of the draft to OD. But Mrs. Thatcher has made a number of comments on the text which I list below.

Part I: Paragraph 102

With regard to the last sentence, the Prime Minister has pointed out that submarines were despatched to the South Atlantic before the date mentioned.

Part I: Paragraph 113

The Prime Minister doubts the wisdom of raising in this Paper the question of our consideration of a blockade of the Islands. She recalls that at the time the advice was that a blockade was simply not possible.

Part I: Paragraph 121

*Passage deleted and closed, 40 years, under  
FOI exemption. Mayland, 1 May 2012*

Part II: Paragraph 203

The Prime Minister would prefer the sentence "The group was briefed daily ..... overall commander of the operation." to be deleted. She considers it unwise to go into this detail. Mrs. Thatcher has also pointed out that the sentence later in the same paragraph, beginning "Care was taken to avoid British military action which would jeopardise our diplomatic efforts" is likely to cause difficulty in that the Government will be asked to provide specific instances.

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Part II: Paragraph 205

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With regard to the penultimate sentence, Mrs. Thatcher has asked what the changes are which will be introduced?

Part II: Paragraph 217

The Prime Minister is inclined to doubt whether the Paper should say (as in the second sentence of the draft) that the losses which the Task Force suffered were "less than we had feared". She has pointed out that we were never able to assess in advance the likely losses.

Part II: Paragraph 228

The Prime Minister has commented that this paragraph sounds weak.

Part II: Paragraph 229

The Prime Minister has asked whether the words "A longer term study" should not read "An urgent study"?

Part II: Paragraph 257

As I told you on the telephone, the Prime Minister asked why the University College of Cardiff had been asked to carry out a study of the relationship between the media and the Government in a time of armed conflict? Mrs. Thatcher would prefer the last sentence of this paragraph, referring to a special working party, to be deleted. She believes that the Government would be constantly asked to report on its progress.

Part III: Paragraph 305

Mrs. Thatcher has commented that this paragraph will cause trouble. She doubts whether it is really fair in the light of the increased provision that has been made for the Defence Budget.

A. J. COLES

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