

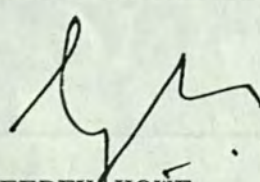


FCS/84/251

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DEFENCE

Falkland Islands: Further Capital Works

1. Thank you for your minute of 6 September. I have no objection to your authorising the PSA to proceed with contract action on the basis you propose.
2. I am grateful for the undertaking in paragraph 9 of your minute to consult me about the public handling of the contract action. My primary concern is that the announcement should be so worded as to give the Argentines the least possible scope for exploiting it as evidence to support their allegations that we plan to develop the Falkland Islands as a "strategic base". An early, low-key announcement would be best in order to avoid providing Argentina with a topical debating point in the United Nations General Assembly debate on the Falklands. I suggest that if other members of OD(FAF) agree to going ahead with the contract our officials should consider the terms and timing of the announcement, based on the draft which your officials have produced, with the aim of making the news public as soon as possible.
3. I am copying this minute to the Prime Minister, OD(FAF) colleagues, the Secretary of State for the Environment and Sir Robert Armstrong.


GEOFFREY HOWE

Foreign and Commonwealth Office
17 September, 1984

cc/c

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Argentina - Defense of the Falklands
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