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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

20 January 1986

Bar Charles,

MS

Prime Minister

An additional point  
for Mr. Abe.

CDP 291

Falklands Fisheries

Intensive negotiations with the Japanese have been in progress over the past four weeks to persuade them to accept our proposal that they should exercise self-restraint in fishing for squid at the Falklands. They have moved a very considerable way to meet our request that their fishing effort in 1986 should be no greater than in 1985, but are still a little way from satisfying us.

Current negotiations at official level have failed to close the gap. Mr Abe will be seeing the Secretary of State. An additional appointment has now been made for his deputy to see Sir W Harding. There may yet be some give in the Japanese position. We think it would be helpful if the Prime Minister could raise the subject briefly with Mr Abe.

A self-contained brief is attached. It has not yet been seen by Sir Geoffrey Howe, but will be submitted to him in parallel tonight.

Yours ever

R N Culshaw

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Essential Facts

In November we learnt that the Japanese, Koreans and Taiwanese were planning a major increase in the fishing effort aimed at the South West Atlantic which was likely to triple the effort devoted to squid. Expert advice is that such an effort could well undermine the viability of the squid fishery.

Accordingly, we invited the fishing nations to exercise self-restraint, and the three Far Eastern countries to limit their fishing effort to the 1985 level. Initially, our representations met with little response, but, following our elevating the matter to the political level (messages from the Secretary of State), in the last fortnight the Japanese and Koreans have shown themselves more responsive to our requirements.

The Japanese have proved tougher than the Koreans, but following intensive exchanges in the last few days, the distance between us and them is now quite small. Our position is that 45 Japanese vessels (last year's figure) should be authorised to fish in the FIPZ between 1 March and mid June. Their offer (a substantial reduction on the original plan of over 100 vessels) is 55 vessels. We have said that we should prefer them to meet our proposal, or that the 55 vessels should leave the FIPZ by mid-May. This difference could not be resolved today at official level (Sir W Harding and the Japanese Ambassador).

A meeting is now being arranged between Sir W Harding and the Japanese Deputy Foreign Minister just before Mr Abe meets the Secretary of State. This may be an indication that the Japanese could still give ground and suggests that there would be point in the Prime Minister touching on the matter with Mr Abe to get him to move the last few inches. Time will be short. The following points might be made.



Points to Make

1. Most appreciative of effort you have already made. We should prefer to maintain 1985 level ie 45 vessels.
2. This is a real conservation problem, for which we are responsible. Fishery under threat. Expect co-operation from partners.
3. Hope next year we shall have a multilaterally agreed regime.
4. Issue also has political dimension. Hope you can support our efforts to avoid creating a situation that could increase tension in South West Atlantic.