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The Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey Howe MP
Secretary of State for
Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs
Whitehall
LONDON SW1A 2AL

CD 315

29 April 1988

Dear Geoffrey,

attached
OD(FAF)(88)2: ALTERNATIVE CIVILIAN PRESENCE ON SOUTH GEORGIA

George Younger's letter to you of 19 April, which he copied to me, about the above memorandum alerted my office to the fact that I had not been included in the circulation. This has now been rectified, but it explains my late response.

I concur with your proposal to commission an analysis of existing data about the fisheries around South Georgia. I also agree with the comment in paragraph 2 of your reply of 26 April to George Younger, that it would be premature now to set timetables for putting a civilian presence in place.

As far as involvement of the British Antarctic Survey (BAS) with Grytviken is concerned, I would like to stress the point made in paragraph 9 of the paper attached to your memorandum, that a station at Grytviken is not a scientific priority for BAS. It was of low priority in the late 1970s when BAS wished to withdraw, and since then nothing has happened to increase the scientific importance of such a base; indeed if anything interest has declined.

Please keep me in touch with progress.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Prime Minister, to other members of OD(FAF) and to Sir Robin Butler.

Yours ever

CONFIDENTIAL *Kenneth*

P.S. We are of course spending much more in the BAS this year for its work in the Antarctic seas.

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