



10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER  
CONFIDENTIAL

9 August 1982 +

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C. DES  
CO  
CS-HUT  
MOD  
FO

Hermann Bondi

Dear Sir Alec,

I was grateful to you and Hermann Bondi for coming to see me the other evening with Keith Joseph to discuss the British Antarctic Survey. I agreed to write to you setting out how the conclusions we reached would be implemented.

We agreed that there were valid strategic reasons for expanding the BAS so as to increase our presence in Antarctica and to ensure that we are in a strong position in the region by 1991 when the Antarctic Treaty may be reviewed. But you and Hermann Bondi persuaded me that an expansion of BAS could not command a sufficiently high priority in relation to other important and potentially successful areas of science for the ABRC or the NERC to allocate additional funds to the BAS on scientific judgement. You recognised, however, the need for the Government's control over public expenditure to be maintained.

To meet both these requirements, the Government will earmark £5 million annually for BAS by setting aside that sum from within whatever provision is made for science in our cash plans.

I recognise that expansion of BAS on this scale will inevitably take time. I understand that for 1983-84 it may be necessary to earmark between £3 million and £5 million, dependent on the speed of build-up and the phasing of capital expenditure.

/I am sending

I am sending copies of this letter to Francis Pym, Keith Joseph, John Nott, Leon Brittan, Robert Armstrong and Hermann Bondi.

Yours sincerely  
Margaret Thatcher

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Sir Alec Merrison