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PRIME MINISTERBritish Policy in Antarctica: Minerals

In the attached paper the Foreign Secretary and the Energy Secretary seek OD's agreement to the line to be taken by our delegation at the next negotiating round in Bonn from 11-22 July.

Specifically, you are invited:-

- a) To endorse the UK's basic objectives at annex B (which you have agreed before).
- b) To agree that we should accept the New Zealand chairman's proposals in annex C as the starting point for negotiations in Bonn.
- c) To approve the brief attached to the main paper.

I believe that you can endorse all these points for the purposes of the Bonn meeting which is not likely to make much progress towards final agreement on a minerals regime in Antarctica. But I am a little unhappy that this potentially important matter continues to be handled out of committee. I suspect that Ministers will not really focus on the issues until they have to attend an OD meeting and argue the case. Paragraph 5 of the attached paper shows that there is likely to be a move at this year's General Assembly to declare Antarctica the "common heritage of mankind". I suggest, if you agree, that an OD discussion of the whole question be arranged for the autumn. Agree?

Yes m

Are you otherwise content for the proposals for handling the Bonn meeting?

Yes m
A. J. C.

5 July 1983

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