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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

6 April 1982

Dear David,

Mr Nott's winding-up speech on 7 April

The Defence Secretary asked Patrick Wright today for a passage for the speech on the question of 'misjudgement' of Argentine intentions regarding the Falkland Islands. I enclose a draft passage which has been seen by Mr Pym. Mr Pym himself hopes that the debate will be as forward-looking as possible, /will that references to the past/be kept to a minimum and that this draft passage will be used only if it appears necessary in the light of the debate to address the misjudgement point.

Yours ever

J E Holmes

(J E Holmes)
Private Secretary

D Omand Esq
PS/Secretary of State for Defence

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PASSAGE

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.....In Confidence

CAVEAT.....

In recent months there were some signs to cause concern. We were watching these with the greatest care. For instance there were truculent articles in the Argentine press. Yet they were nothing new. And by no means all the indicators, diplomatic or military, suggested new developments.

The evidence available to us shows that the Argentine regime took the decision to invade no earlier than 28 March and possibly as late as 31 March. The evidence before that time was not clear, was to some extent contradictory, and in our assessment on the whole pointed the other way. This was a mistaken assessment as it turned out, but it was not at the time unreasonable. Nor were we alone in holding it. Indeed, the view that on balance invasion was not likely to be imminent was held by other friendly and usually well-informed governments as well as ourselves.

Enclosures—flag(s).....