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David Barclay Esq
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London SW1

20 August 1984

Dear David,

*Pa.
DMS
26/8*

MR PONTING

You told me this morning that the Prime Minister had queried whether MOD were following the correct procedure in suspending Mr Ponting without pay and asked me to check. This letter confirms our subsequent telephone conversations.

In short MOD (Richard Hastie-Smith) tell me that the decision to suspend Mr Ponting without pay was taken before it had been decided to charge him under the Official Secrets Act and against the possibility that his offered resignation might have been accepted. In the light of the decision to prosecute they have however now returned Mr Ponting to full pay, with effect from the moment of suspension.

You also told me that the MOD's earlier briefing for Press Offices had included a reference to the suspension without pay and asked that the briefing be updated to reflect the new situation. I have asked MOD to ensure that this happens.

I am copying this letter to Richard Hastie-Smith (MOD), to the private secretary to the Secretary of State for Defence, to Antony Acland and Tony Hetherington and to Rex Davie and Richard Hatfield here.

*Tam
P.L.*

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