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 C. J. P. Crook

From the Private Secretary

16 January 1985

Redacted under FOI exemption sections 23/24.

BELGRANO

The Foreign Secretary informed the Prime Minister this evening of the discussions which he had had with colleagues in recent days on the question whether to meet the request of Defence Counsel in the Ponting trial for release to them of an expurgated version of the document known as the Crown Jewels. Agreement had been reached that it would be harmful to the prosecution to release an expurgated version since it would give a misleading and damaging picture of events. Instead, the Government should make available, and themselves be prepared to put in evidence, under appropriate safeguards, the unexpurgated document with a request that the proceedings be held in camera. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. A decision was needed urgently so that the document could be made available by the end of the week and the process of positive vetting of jurors begun without delay.

The Prime Minister said that it was curious that the defence had taken the risk of asking for a partial version of a document which, in its full form was likely to be damaging to their case. She assumed that the intelligence implications of releasing the document even under safeguards had been fully considered. With the assurance that the relevant part of the trial would indeed be held in camera, she agreed that the unexpurgated document should be made available to the court.

I am copying this letter to Henry Steel (Law Officers' Department) and Richard Mottram (Ministry of Defence).

CHARLES POWELL

Len Appleyard, Esq.,
 Foreign and Commonwealth Office.