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10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

*From the Principal Private Secretary*SIR ROBIN BUTLERWESTLAND: DEFENCE COMMITTEE

Can I bring you up to date? The Labour members of the Committee, egged on by a provocative note from the Clerk - Flag A, raised Westland at today's meeting. My note - Flag B, describes the outcome. Before next week's meeting efforts will now be made to get Sir Barney Hayhoe and John Wilkinson to think again. The position is rather perilous. There are five Government members on the Committee, four Labour and one SDP. Even if only one of the rebels votes with the opposition the vote would be carried 6:4 and the Chairman's casting vote would not come into play.

Could I also draw your attention to the remarks by Mr. Winnick in the House yesterday - Flag C. If he had spoken about a fellow Member in these terms he would have been asked to withdraw. The position seems to be, however, that Members can say what they like about non-members, but also enjoy privilege while doing so. You may like to consider whether there is anything which can be done to protect civil servants from accusations of this kind; and what could be done to rebut such accusations once made.

ANDREW TURNBULL

12 April 1989