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File AH

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

FALKLAND ISLANDS : COMMITTEE ARRANGEMENTS

Thank you for your minute of 3 April 1982 about Cabinet Committee arrangements for dealing with the Falkland Islands.

I have now been able to consult the Prime Minister, and she agrees that the major decisions should be taken by the Cabinet or by OD. She is very ready for the CDS and the CNS, as necessary, to be invited to OD. She is also happy for the Secretary of the Chiefs of Staff Committee to attend as an additional member of the secretariat when that would be helpful.

As you anticipated, she wants her existing small group of Ministers to continue in being as the body in which the most urgent decisions are taken. She has, however, decided to change slightly the membership and it will now consist of:-

Prime Minister
Home Secretary
Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary
Secretary of State for Defence
Paymaster General

Again, members of the Chiefs of Staff Committee will need to be invited as necessary. She also agrees that the group should now be designated as a sub-committee of OD. This means, of course, that the Cabinet Office will provide the secretariat.

I should be grateful if you could promulgate urgently the establishment of the new sub-committee to those who need to know about it.

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Mr Whitmore ^{KMS}

In the next phase of the Falklands crisis, thinking about what action should be taken, both diplomatically and militarily, is going to evolve, as circumstances develop and as the military appraisals are more fully worked out.

2. I think that we ought to get the decision-making process on to a more orderly footing.

3. Major decisions will need to be taken by the Cabinet or the Defence and Overseas Policy Committee (OD). During this phase the Chief of the Defence Staff (who should be back by Tuesday) and ~~then~~ perhaps the Chief of the Naval Staff

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will normally need to be invited to TD,
and we may find it convenient to add
the Secretary of the Chiefs of Staff
Committee as an additional member
of the Secretariat, to ensure that decisions
are quickly conveyed and put into
effect.

4. The Prime Minister will want and
need to keep her small group in
being. So far you have assumed the
service of that, but I should like
to suggest that we should now take
that on, not just to take the load
off you and your colleagues at No. 10,
but also to enable the Defence
Secretariat to ensure coordination
and provide briefing.

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5. This could be done, in the formal sense, by making the small group a sub-committee of OD, under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister and including the Home Secretary, the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, the Lord President and the Defence Secretary. For a continuing group we should probably add the Chancellor of the Exchequer; should we also add the Secretary of State for Trade, ~~or~~ or is his membership of OD sufficient to cover his political and departmental interests?

6. The secretaries of the new sub-committee would of course need to keep in very close touch with you and Mr Coles, as well as with departments.

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