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Argentina  
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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH



*MS*

5 May 1982

Prime Minister  
To note

A.J.L. 5/15

*Dear John,*

Falklands: Chequers meeting of ODSA on 2 May

In his letter of 2 May to David Omand at the Ministry of Defence, Robert Wade-Gery recorded the decisions taken at this meeting. Among these were invitations to the FCO to investigate what more needed to be done to step up the quality and quantity of broadcasts to Argentina and the Falkland Islands; and to consider with the Ministry of Defence arrangements for the removal of Argentine prisoners. This is an interim reply on both points. We will be taking continuing action to ensure as satisfactory arrangements as possible in relation to both issues.

Since Robert Wade-Gery's letter was written, the Argentines have started jamming the BBC Spanish Service to South America. Reports from our posts have suggested that this Service is providing a growing audience with excellent coverage of the crisis, as is the 24-hour World Service in English. The extent of the jamming, and the means by which it is being done, are still unclear, and are being investigated by the BBC. The World Service in English and the Special Service to the Falkland Islands remain unaffected.

We have asked the BBC to consider urgently the possibilities of circumventing the jamming by any means open to them, and for proposals to increase the hours of their broadcasts to Latin America in Spanish. We have approached the Voice of America (who broadcast in Spanish to Latin America for some five-and-a-half hours a day) to draw their attention to the jamming, and to urge them to use the maximum amount of factual material about the Falkland Islands and our military operations put out by HMG. The US Embassy are supporting us on this. The Falkland Islands Service is now broadcast daily (the Islands are also getting the BBC's World Service) and has included special messages from the Foreign Secretary and Mr Cranley Onslow in the past few days. The Governor and Falkland Islands Councillors are also participating regularly in these programmes, which carry messages to the Islanders from friends and relatives in the UK.

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We have asked our Embassy in Santiago to approach the Chilean authorities to urge their media to carry more of our material. Finally, we have given as wide publicity as possible to the fact of the Argentine jamming, which provides clear evidence that the Argentine Government do not want their people to have access to the facts.

As to the point about the removal of Argentine prisoners, we are taking up urgently with the MOD the question of the timing of any approach to the International Committee of the Red Cross. We note that the Chiefs of Staff already had this subject under consideration and are currently considering a paper which should issue very shortly.

I am sending copies of this letter to Robert Wade-Gery and the other recipients of his letter under reference.

*Yours ever*

(J E Holmes) *J E Holmes*  
Private Secretary

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