



10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

23 December, 1983

Her Majesty

In replying to your two Written Questions on 19 December about the transfer of sovereignty over dependent territories, I undertook to write to you.

To take your second question first, our policy (which is subject where appropriate to the approval of Parliament) in respect of those dependent territories where independence is an option is to transfer sovereignty in accordance with the wishes of the people of the territory concerned. Sovereignty would normally be transferred to the newly independent state. This policy cannot be applied to those territories where, because of special circumstances, independence, in the long or short term, is not an option; or where there is no indigenous population. In these cases it is Her Majesty's Government's policy to seek the most suitable arrangements for the territories' administration. Each case is considered individually.

As regards your first Question, we have frankly had some difficulty in interpreting the meaning of the phrase "governed under the immediate authority of the Crown, not being Crown

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colonies, other dependent territories or other sovereign areas not in the preceding categories". It would help me to give you a satisfactory answer if you could let me know whether you have specific territories in mind.

Yours sincerely
Raymond D. Butler

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