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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

15 April 1982

*We raised this  
question this  
morning  
not*

Prime Minister

*To note.*

*A.J.C. 15/4*

*Dear John,*

*h-a.  
15/4*

Falkland Islands

*h-a.*

The Prime Minister may wish to have in mind the implications of paragraph 2 of the Draft Agreed Memorandum, as discussed with Mr Haig, for the illegal Argentine station on Southern Thule. If all military forces were to be withdrawn, as envisaged in the Draft Agreed Memorandum, any Argentine military personnel on Southern Thule would also in logic have to be removed. This might be a useful presentational point for the Prime Minister in eventual presentation to Parliament of any agreement.

As far as we know, the Argentine station on Southern Thule is still being maintained on a year-round basis. Our latest report, based on observation from HMS Endurance in February 1981, was that about 50 Argentines were present at the Southern Thule base. This however was during the summer season; in the winter season the complement would be much smaller. For example, in the annual Argentine report of their Antarctic activities for 1978 it was stated that there were 11 Argentine personnel on Southern Thule.

Although we do not have precise information on the proportion of military personnel to civilians at Southern Thule, Argentine Antarctic stations are administered by the military and have military support staff. There is therefore a strong presumption that some Argentine military personnel are there. (This is consistent with the Antarctic Treaty, provided that such military personnel are working in support of scientific investigation.)

*Yours ever*

*John Holmes*

(J E Holmes)  
Private Secretary

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