

CEPC



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

28 March 1984

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F. a.

Dear Richard Norton,

Falklands Airfield Land

The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary has seen Mr Heseltine's minute of 26 March to the Prime Minister confirming that there is no objection to the signing of a contract for the purchase of the Airfield land and explaining that it is desirable that this should be done immediately, before the departure from London of the Falkland Islands Attorney-General. Sir Geoffrey Howe has also seen John Coles's letter of 27 March confirming that the Prime Minister agrees that the signing should take place on the terms agreed.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary agrees that we have no option but to sign the contract as now negotiated with the Falkland Islands Company. The Company have their flaws, but they will retain a central role in a variety of important civilian as well as military undertakings in the Islands. Relations with them should not be soured unnecessarily; it is meanwhile important to press ahead with the work at Mount Pleasant.

Sir Geoffrey Howe also agrees with the Defence Secretary that the best course will be to make an early announcement in Parliament setting the facts straight. We envisage the Civil Commissioner being instructed to make clear in the Falklands that the purchase of the Airfield land is a special case, in which due account must be taken of the pressing nature of essential military and economic considerations, and that it need have no bearing on land prices in the Falklands in general. At this end, we take it that appropriate steps will be taken by the MOD, in drafting their public announcement, to ensure that the FIC are in full agreement.

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I am copying this letter to the Private Secretaries to the members of OD(FAF), to the Secretary of State for the Environment and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours ever,

Len Appleyard

(L V Appleyard)
Private Secretary

R C Mottram Esq
Ministry of Defence

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Defense of Falk. Is.
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