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FCS/82/68

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DEFENCEPrime Minister

A &amp; C. 4/5

MS

South Africa

Thank you for your minute of <sup>29</sup>28 April about Eldon Griffiths's impression of South African willingness to grant us naval and other support facilities in connection with the Falklands operations.

I agree that it would be right to respond on the lines you suggest.

I take your comment that the South African line seems at variance with the assessment given by our Charge d'Affaires in mid-April. But I think it quite likely that South African attitudes may have evolved as the crisis has developed. Our Embassy have reported some evidence to this effect. If so, it seems likely that increasing evidence of Soviet and Cuban support for Argentina has been a factor in this.

Nonetheless, I do not think that we can take it for granted from Eldon Griffiths's soundings that the South Africans would now be bound to react positively to a request for facilities. Nor if they did so should we assume that they would not expect to extract an unacceptably high price. There would also be a heavy diplomatic penalty to pay as regards support for our Falklands case from Third World countries.

I am copying this minute to the recipients of yours.

5 May 1982

(FRANCIS PYM)