



Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
London SW1A 2AH

25 January 1983

Prime Minister

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Dear John,

Falkland Islands: Roads

You asked for a note about the state of the roads in and around Port Stanley. I attach one describing the work recently set in hand as part of the civilian rehabilitation programme. The note explains that decisions on a more radical approach to road improvement will have to be taken in the context of defence requirements.

I am sending copies of this letter and enclosure to Michael Mottram (Defence) and Terry Mathews (Chief Secretary's Office).

Yours ever

J E Holmes

(J E Holmes)  
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq  
10 Downing Street



## FALKLAND ISLANDS: ROADS IN THE PORT STANLEY AREA

Many roads in Port Stanley are now impassable for cars and difficult to negotiate in landrovers and trucks. The road to the airport has also collapsed in several places.

Military and civilian authorities in Port Stanley agree that the bulk of the damage - perhaps 90 per cent - has been caused by the volume and weight of British military traffic since the end of the fighting. Repair of the roads was therefore initially seen as primarily a military task.

Late last year, it became clear that Royal Engineers' capacity would be fully employed throughout the Falklands summer on service accommodation work (including site preparation for the first two coastels). Road repair had lower military priority. The Falkland Islands Public Works Department lacks equipment and manpower to tackle a major crash programme of road repair and improvement. Its road work capacity is currently being used on housing infrastructure, and is then earmarked for further work on constructing the Stanley-Darwin Road.

Sir Neil Marten therefore authorised an urgent road repair project to be financed from the £15m civilian rehabilitation budget. A management team is to be engaged through Crown Agents to supervise a labour force obtained through competitive tender from a UK civil engineering contractor. Equipment and materials will be obtained off-the-shelf or from the contractor, whichever best meets the necessary time-scale. The aim is to have the works unit operating by early March. The priority is to restore one adequate heavy traffic

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circuit in Port Stanley, to repair the worst town junctions and to deal with the worst sections of the airport road. The work cannot be fully costed in advanced but £2.5m has been allocated to engage, equip and transport a team for this purpose. It will be available for a minimum of eight months, and can tackle other priority tasks if weather halts road work.

The Civil Commissioner and his Director of Public Works recently asked for a much larger scale approach to the problem. They favoured a unit with four times as much manpower and equipment to be made available for twelve months, with the aim of rebuilding the town network and the roads to the airport and to Moody Brook.

Before such a programme can be tackled, decisions are required on funding and on specification to cover projected levels of military traffic. The £15m civilian rehabilitation budget was provided to cope with estimated war damage, and cannot accommodate a larger roads project. Nor is there a civilian requirement to rebuild other than to previous specifications. We understand that Mr Wiggin intends to consider the extent of military requirement during his current visit, with a view to decisions on his return. But that timetable will not allow mobilisation before winter. The Civil Commissioner has therefore agreed that the proposed repair programme should go ahead, with the aim of easing the circulation of traffic rapidly and limiting expensive further deterioration during the winter. An ODA engineer is travelling to Port Stanley on January 26, and will discuss further roads requirements with civil and military authorities.

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There is provision for some work on roads outside Port Stanley within the £31m development programme approved by Ministers in November. The cost of completing the Stanley-Darwin road is a central factor. If the new airfield were to be built at the March Ridge/ Mount Pleasant site, part of this road might need to be finished to a higher specification as a charge to Defence funds. Decisions on civilian road-building in camp can therefore best be taken once details of the new airfield and associated facilities have been settled.

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Argentina

26 January 1983

This is just to record that the Prime Minister has seen your letter of 25 January to John Coles about the state of the roads in and around Port Stanley.

Tim Flesher

John Holmes, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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