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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

18 October 1982

*Discussed with
F./C.O. in phone.*

A.J.C. 18/10

Dear John,

CHOGM: Attendance by the Fijian Prime Minister

Our High Commissioner in Suva has reported that the Prime Minister of Fiji told him yesterday that he was as yet undecided about attending CHOGM, which unfortunately coincided with a budget debate in the Fijian Parliament.

It so happens that the Prime Minister will be attending a dinner at our High Commissioner's Residence tomorrow. Our High Commissioner has commented that, given the constructive and moderating influence which Ratu Mara can exercise in CHOGM discussions, it would be disappointing from Britain's point of view if he were not present. Mr Barltrop wonders whether he could be authorised to say that Mrs Thatcher personally had been looking forward to seeing him at CHOGM and very much hopes he may find it possible to attend.

We share Mr Barltrop's belief that Ratu Mara would generally be a helpful influence at CHOGM; you may recall that he played a helpful part in ensuring that our position on the Falkland Islands was brought to the attention of participants at the meeting of Commonwealth Regional Heads of Government in Suva last October. He is strongly opposed to our policy on UNLOSC; but generally he plays a responsible role.

We would, therefore, like to authorise Mr Barltrop to speak to Ratu Mara tomorrow along the lines he suggests, but if we are to do so, we shall have to send a telegram this evening. Perhaps we could have a word about this?

Yours ever

(J E Holmes)
Private Secretary

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