

Mr. Ingham

WESTLAND REPORTS - MEDIA HANDLING

The Prime Minister discussed with Sir Robert Armstrong your minute of 16 July and his of 17 July about handling the media when the Defence Select Committee publish their report on Westland next Thursday.

The Prime Minister said that the Government's response should be calm. Over-reaction should be avoided. We should keep what we say to the minimum and not get into details of matters such as who said and did what, and when. On the particular points described on the second page of your minute, the Government's response should refer, wherever possible, to the response to the TCSC Report which was being published the same day. On criticisms of named civil servants and calls for disciplinary action, we should reaffirm the firm statements already made by the Prime Minister on this subject.

I am copying this minute to the Lord President, the Chief Whip and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

(N. L. WICKS)

18 July 1986

*DLW*