



10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Principal Private Secretary*

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

DEFENCE COMMITTEE: WESTLAND PLC

I have sent you in a separate minute the Prime Minister's comments on the draft responses to the Defence Committee's Reports which you submitted in your minutes of 19 and 23 September, with copies to other interested Ministers. But I thought that I ought to minute you alone to register the Prime Minister's considerable concern about paragraph 7 of the draft response attached to your minute of 23 September. On reading this, it seemed to the Prime Minister that this would cause her critics to call for her resignation and raise all manner of difficult issues. She would therefore be grateful if you could particularly look at the drafting of this paragraph, in the light of the comments in my other minute which I have sent you today.

You should know that in this connection the Prime Minister has asked me to look out the Hansard references to the Hola Camp case in, I think, 1958 when she recalls that the whole question of Ministerial responsibility to Parliament was debated. I am trying to find the necessary references.

As I have already told Michael Stark, it would be very helpful in this connection if you could provide a note for the Prime Minister on the doctrine of ministerial responsibility to Parliament, which summarises circumstances in which Ministers have, and have not, resigned.

N.L.W.

N. L. Wicks

24 September 1986