



FILE Govt #4  
Mach  
Copied to: I. Gov  
(10/11)  
HMT.

10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

11 November, 1982

Dear Mr Stewart

I am sorry I have not replied sooner to your further letter of 5 October about the provision of Customs facilities at Wick airport. Since, as I think you know, I attach great importance to the removal of unnecessary barriers to enterprise, I wished to go over the ground once more to see whether it might not be possible to find a way of meeting the needs of Air Ecosse. I am sorry to say that there is not.

As you acknowledged in your latest letter, we would have insurmountable problems in providing Customs facilities wherever they are demanded. And the demand for new provision is considerable; in recent months Customs have had to refuse applications from Dundee, Belfast Harbour, Carlisle, Sunderland, Swansea, Newquay and Elstree.

You suggested that a Customs officer might be seconded from duties nearby on the days when scheduled services were operating. As you know, this is indeed what happens at present at Wick, where Customs do provide facilities for handling oil-related and occasional business traffic on an ad hoc basis. And they will continue to meet whatever demand arises for this limited traffic; they are ready to attend flights on a selective basis where there is no question of their having to apply immigration controls.

But this is the nub of the matter; immigration controls cannot be applied on a selective basis without setting at risk

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the security of our policing of immigration, human and animal disease and drugs. As you rightly say, that is a risk we would not be justified in running. So while Customs could no doubt make arrangements to deal with solely Customs matters arising from scheduled flights, no acceptable alternative arrangements could be made to deal with the security problems.

I do understand your concern and am only sorry to be unable to find an acceptable way of meeting it.

Yours sincerely  
Margaret Thatcher

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The Rt. Hon. D.J. Stewart, M.P.

Govt. Mach.



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10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

8 December, 1982

The Prime Minister has asked me to thank you for your letter of 2 December about Customs facilities at Wick Airport.

W. F. S. RICKETT

The Rt Hon Donald Stewart, MP.,

From: The Rt. Hon. Donald Stewart, M.P.



2 December 1982

HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

*pps*

The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher, M.P.,  
Prime Minister,  
10 Downing Street,  
LONDON. S.W.1

*B3*

*Prime Minister*

*If you agree, I will simply  
thank Mr Stewart for his letter  
on your behalf.*

*Dear Prime Minister,*

*W*

Thank you for your further letter dated  
11 November on the subject of Customs facilities at Wick  
airport.

*W  
6/12*

I note the pressure on the Customs to provide  
facilities at various points and that these have had to be  
turned down.

However, I am pleased to hear that a system  
is in operation in which officers can be seconded for duty  
at Wick when the situation arises and that this demand will  
continue to be met where practicable.

I am grateful for your investigation of this  
problem.

*Yours sincerely,  
Donald Stewart*

Donald Stewart

Gen Macb

Apr 82

Wick August



UNIT OF TOWN  
LONDON

CONFIDENTIAL



Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street, SW1P 3AG

W Rickett Esq  
Private Secretary to the  
Prime Minister  
10 Downing Street  
London SW1A 2AL

10 November 1982

*Dear Willie,* *mine* *in* *10/11*

WICK AIRPORT

... As requested in your letter to me of 8 November, I attach a further draft reply for the Prime Minister to Donald Stewart's letter of October 5th about the provision of Customs facilities at Wick airport.

*yours sincerely,*

*Chris*

C D HARRISON  
Private Secretary

Draft letter from: Prime Minister

to: Donald Stewart Esq MP

I am sorry I have not replied sooner to your further letter of October 5th about the provision of Customs facilities at Wick airport. Since, as I think you know, I attach great importance to the removal of unnecessary barriers to enterprise, I wished to go over the ground once more to see whether it might not be possible to find a way of meeting the needs of Air Ecosse. I ~~have very regretfully~~ <sup>am sorry to say</sup> ~~to tell you that I have been obliged to conclude that~~ there is not.

As you acknowledged in your latest letter, we would have insurmountable problems in providing Customs facilities wherever they are demanded. And the demand for new provision is considerable; in recent months Customs have had to refuse applications from Dundee, Belfast Harbour, Carlisle, Sunderland, Swansea, Newquay and Elstree.

You suggested that a Customs officer might be seconded from duties nearby on the days when scheduled services were operating. As you know, this is indeed what happens at present at Wick, where Customs do provide facilities for handling oil-related and occasional business traffic on an ad hoc basis. And they will continue to meet whatever demand arises for this limited traffic; they are ready to attend flights on a selective basis where there is no question of their having to apply immigration controls.

// But this is the nub of the matter; immigration controls cannot be applied on a selective basis without setting at risk the security of our policing of immigration, human and animal disease and drugs. And as you rightly say, that is a risk we would not be justified in running. So while Customs could no doubt make arrangements to deal with solely Customs matters arising from scheduled flights, no acceptable alternative arrangements could be made to deal with the security problems.

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