

~~Mr Alexander - No. 10~~

*Prints 6/x*

Sinai Force: Australian Position

The Secretary of State discussed the matter in confidence with Mr Street in the margins of this morning's session. It emerged that the real Australian worry was over their extensive trade with Iran and Iraq. They felt that if they were to participate in the force and the Arabs retaliated against their trade, there would be an uproar in Australia and an anti-American backlash. Moreover, there had been considerable debate in the press and public opinion polls had been taken on the question of participation: the balance of opinion was heavily against participation. Mr Street went on to say that the Australians had not come to a firm conclusion and that Ministers would be meeting tomorrow morning. It would be easier for Australia to participate if Canada, New Zealand or the United Kingdom were to do so too. (It was clear at least by implication that the Australian position was not that UK participation was essential. Rather, it was important to them that another respectable Commonwealth country should be involved.)

The Secretary of State made it clear to Mr Street that it was very unlikely that we would participate, but no final decision had been reached and we were consulting our European partners.

*J. Carey*  
M (B J P Fall)  
Private Secretary

2 October 1981

cc: PS  
PUS