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HMS ENDURANCE

1. I lunched with Lord Shackleton earlier this week and among the points he raised with me was his disappointment at the cutting of HMS Endurance. He rehearsed the usual arguments for maintaining Endurance's service to Antarctica and the Falklands, and I rehearsed on familiar lines the economy arguments. He was aware that the Foreign Office were on his side over this and had done what they could to preserve Endurance.

2. Yesterday I found myself sitting next to Mr M E Quinlan (Deputy Under Secretary of State for Policy and Programmes in the MOD) at the American Ambassador's house. I took the occasion to ask him whether there was any realistic prospect of having the Endurance decision reversed if we were to re-open at a high level. He said - very convincingly - that he thought we would get nowhere on this: Mr Nott had personally taken a view in the light of all the arguments and felt that he could not afford to be budged even on small items of this sort without jeopardising his whole position. I think there is no mileage in further action on this and shall confirm this view to Lord Shackleton as and when occasion arises.

J B Ure

J B Ure

9 July 1981

cc Mr Day