



Prime Minister Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

Agar Mike

You saw the ministerial exchanges (attached below)

and asked for details of the proposed changes.

22 August 1980

Agree the change in the light of this explanation?

UN Embargo on Provision of Arms to South Africa

MA 22/8

You wrote to Roderic Lyne on 14 August asking about the existing guidelines for the sale of dual purpose equipment to South Africa and the changes which Lord Carrington has proposed.

The existing guidelines were drawn up in response to the imposition of the mandatory UN arms embargo in 1977, but they are broadly similar to those which had been applied under the earlier, voluntary embargo which the UK had applied since 1974. The guidelines apply only to equipment subject to export licensing control which has both a civilian and military application. They state that licences should be granted 'unless the equipment is obviously intended for solely military purposes'. Individual borderline cases are considered on their merits.

The revised guidelines would not restrict ministerial consideration of individual cases. But recommendations by officials would in future be based on the principle that licences would normally be issued for the export of dual-purpose equipment subject to licensing control 'except where it is clear that the equipment is required primarily for its military capability'.

Lord Carrington has explained the arguments in favour of this change in his minute of 28 July and I shall not repeat them. I should, however, emphasise that the intention is not to restrict unnecessarily the scope for UK exports, but to avoid future cases adding to pressure for an extension and tightening of the present Security Council Resolution to impose a total ban on the sale of all dual purpose equipment.

I am sending a copy of this letter to David Wright (Cabinet Office).

It is quite a big change and will result in a lot of individual references. I doubt whether it will achieve its U.N. objective. Please let me know if you refer to the new misc which I have, it is results in as long as any other ref.

and Neilands.

(D J Neilands)
Assistant Private Secretary

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