

PRIME MINISTER

Ministers have been corresponding about the UN embargo on the provision of arms to South Africa. The Foreign Office have suggested some tightening of the guidelines on the export of dual-purpose equipment following the Plessey radar contract. The purpose is to try to prevent the UN itself re-defining or extending the existing arms embargo so as to preclude the export of all dual-purpose equipment. If that happened, Lord Carrington argued that our hands would be much more tightly tied than if we were to exercise voluntary care and discrimination in deciding what equipment to licence. He proposed to revise the guidelines both to help Ministers in deciding on borderline cases referred to them - although each case would still be decided on its merits - and to indicate to officials the kind of cases requiring reference to Ministers. His minute is at Flag A.

Mr. Pym had some hesitation, but has eventually agreed with Lord Carrington's approach - minutes at Flags B and C. Mr. Nott (Flag D) had supported Mr. Pym's original hesitations, and we have not yet heard whether he has also withdrawn his objections.

On the assumption that Mr. Nott now joins the agreement between Mr. Pym and Lord Carrington, are you content to endorse their agreement?

MAP

Where are the new guidelines? If they can't be made public - why revise them. I share Mr. Pym's, Mr. Nott's initial misgivings about changing them.

12 August 1980

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