

see Mr Ingham

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PRIME MINISTER MS



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1
Telephone 01-930 7622 218 2111/3

To see. Not as much fuss as might have been expected - but no doubt the demands will grow.

MO 21/8/4

16th April 1980

MS
16/4

MS.

Dear Nick,

SELECT COMMITTEES: ADVANCE COPIES OF COMMAND PAPERS

In your letter of 31st March you reaffirmed the Prime Minister's agreement to CFR copies of White Papers being provided to the Chairmen of Select Committees at the discretion of the Department concerned, but not any more general distribution to members of those Committees. Accordingly my Secretary of State sent Sir John-Langford-Holt a copy of the 1980 Statement on the Defence Estimates.

The Defence Committee considered the provision of pre-publication copies of the White Paper generally to Members of the Committee at their meeting on 2nd April and their Chairman has reported to the Secretary of State that his Members were unhappy that pre-publication copies were not available to them. The Defence Committee has asked for the question of the provision of such copies of future White Papers to be considered again.

Mr Pym proposes to write back to the Chairman saying that having reconsidered the matter he does not propose to comply with this request but would propose to continue providing the

N Sanders Esq



Chairman with an advance copy. In conveying this decision Mr Pym will make it clear that he is not speaking simply for himself but that this is the considered view of the Government in relation to Select Committees generally.

I am copying this letter to John Chilcot (Home Office), John Stevens (Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster's Office), Richard Prescott (Paymaster General's Office) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

Yours sincerely,

(D B OMAND)