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File

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

30th May 1986

Dear Professor Griffiths,

As a result of our press conference to launch Lord Hill-Norton's report on naval ship design, the media seem to have gained the impression from a report in the Sunday Times published earlier this year, that the formation of the Hill-Norton committee was at the instigation of your Policy Unit.

The truth is somewhat different. Originally, a member of the defence study group at Sir Alfred Sherman's Policy Search had suggested to me that the group, under the chairmanship of Professor R.V. Jones, might be a useful vehicle for considering the issues.

When, subsequently, I discussed the matter with Professor R.V. Jones, we thought it better to form an independent committee and I approached Lord Hill-Norton and invited him to consider the chairmanship. He agreed to attend a lunch to discuss the idea, and we then invited Christopher Monckton to attend as an observer, since I had been introduced to him some time earlier and warned him of the problems which the Government might face on this question.

During the lunch, Lord Hill-Norton asked Monckton whether he could guarantee that the report would be put before the Prime Minister. He replied, "No, Sir," and explained that any submission to the Prime Minister would be considered on its merits. It was at this lunch, on the advice of Dr. Garwin and Professor Jones, that Lord Hill-Norton took the decision to accept chairmanship of the committee and the members agreed to serve. Monckton took no part in this decision.

I hope that this letter will correct any misleading impressions which may have appeared in the media. I am grateful, however, for the interest which the Policy Advisory Group has taken in this problem; it is reassuring to know that someone in Government actually is willing to listen.

Yours sincerely,

pp *Charles Hoste*

Charles Hoste (dictated and signed in his absence)



10 DOWNING STREET

Ordered
Quarters

Can we
set a

NW

line on
short fat
ships

W

This adds something
at least.

M

30/5/86

W.F.

Possibly we will need a
line on short fat ships
for P&S

W.F.

NW
30-5