

CFC



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

22 February, 1985

Dear Charles,

Ch. 2/2.

Call on the Prime Minister by the New Zealand High Commissioner

The newly-arrived New Zealand High Commissioner paid an introductory call on Lady Young this morning.

The Prime Minister may wish to have an account before her own meeting with him this afternoon. Mr Walding said that he very much hoped that a solution could be found to the problem of ships visits. The New Zealand government drew a distinction between the defence policy appropriate for Britain and NATO and that which was suitable for New Zealand. There was strong public resistance in New Zealand to the idea that the country should get embroiled in schemes involving nuclear weapons. Nuclear deterrence was probably the right policy for Britain, but the New Zealand Government did not think it was right for the South Pacific.

Mr Walding said that New Zealand was not seeking to break its defence ties with the United States or Britain. But the New Zealand Government had a sovereign right to determine its own defence policies and would not give in to public pressure on this issue either; indeed the latter would only be counter-productive. New Zealand sought security through the proposals for a nuclear free zone in the South Pacific.

Mr Walding said that there had been much discussion of New Zealand's refusal to accept a "neither confirm nor deny" policy as regards nuclear weapons on ships. The New Zealand Government was not asking the nuclear powers to tell them what their warships were carrying. It would make its own assessment of the capability of naval ships and looked to its allies to send those ships to New Zealand ports which met New Zealand's requirements.

Lady Young set out HMG's position on ships visits on standard lines.

Yours ever,
Peter Ricketts

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(P F Ricketts)
Private Secretary

A very
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concept.