



FCS/81/82

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DEFENCE

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Defence Programme: White Paper

1. I have seen your minute of 18 June to the Prime Minister, covering the draft of the White Paper you propose to publish towards the end of next week.
2. I am entirely content with the draft which presents your proposals very effectively and positively, subject to one point only. Paragraph 38 refers to the Gibraltar dockyard. I think we have agreed that there should be no public announcement of the consideration we are giving to closure of the dockyard until our two Departments have decided on alternative ways of fulfilling our 'support and sustain' commitment and we have consulted the Gibraltar Government. I would therefore prefer all mention of Gibraltar to be deleted from this paragraph. If, however, you judge a reference to be essential to soften the announcement of the closure of the dockyard at Chatham, I propose that the relevant sentence read: 'The Government has concluded that the Royal Dockyard at Chatham will have to close in 1984; and consideration will be given to alternative ways of fulfilling the Government's obligation to support the economy of Gibraltar if it is decided that the dockyard work there cannot be kept up indefinitely. This consideration will be undertaken in closest consultation with the Gibraltar Government.'
3. I am sending copies of this minute to the Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
22 June 1981

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(CARRINGTON)