



CANADA

s.15(1)

PRIME MINISTER · PREMIER MINISTRE

SECRET

OTTAWA K1A 0A2

February 11, 1987

Dear Colleague,

As we approach the point of further Cabinet consideration of the proposed Defence White Paper, I feel it is crucial that we continue to maintain the integrity of this important process.

In this connection, I understand that you wish me to meet with Mr. Johan Holst, the Norwegian Defence Minister, during his upcoming visit to Ottawa. I also understand that you intend to use this opportunity to convey a "final decision" that our CAST commitment to Norway will be abandoned as part of the White Paper, and that you wish me to make the same point to Mr. Holst. Furthermore, I am told that you wish to discuss formally the contents of the White Paper with [redacted] immediately following initial consideration of your draft White Paper by the Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Defence Policy.

Foreign Consult

These steps strike me as premature in terms of the due process of Cabinet consideration of the White Paper. I can well understand your desire to alter our current commitment to Norway - White Paper or no White Paper. However, in my view, the communication of this and other information to Norway or our other Allies in any other than the most general and tentative terms is undesirable prior to full Cabinet consideration and approval of a new Canadian defence policy. At issue is not only due process but also the [redacted] In addition it creates expectations which could make any delay, postponement or alteration of the White Paper - for whatever reason - particularly embarrassing.

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On other issues, such as equality rights, I would also strongly encourage you to refrain from expressing your own views on these issues, prior to full Cabinet consideration of Government policy in this area.

These comments are made in terms of the best interests of the Government, and I encourage you in the valuable work you are doing to bring to Cabinet a long-overdue re-thinking of our defence policy and commitments.

Yours sincerely,

