

S
805

PREM 19/482

The reactivation of the Civil Contingencies Unit in the Cabinet Office.

Review of Contingency Planning.

Use of Central Press Unit, Territorial and Volunteer Reserves during Industrial Disputes

GOVERNMENT
MACHINERY

Pe 1.

May 1979

Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date
1.4.80		13.2.81					
2.4.80		25.2.81.					
15.4.80		Pe leads -					
8.8.80							
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16.12.80							
16.1.81							
5.2.81							

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PREM 19/4/82

PART 1 ends:-

RTA to TL A04339 2.3.81

PART 2 begins:-

ccw(81)A - 4.3.81

TO BE RETAINED AS TOP ENCLOSURE

Cabinet / Cabinet Committee Documents

Reference	Date
CCU (79) 14	14.8.79
E (79) 48	10.10.79
E (79) 11 th Meeting, Minute 1	16.10.79
E (79) 71	29.11.79
E (79) 62	29.11.79
E (79) 17 th Meeting, Minute 4	4.12.79
E (80) 24	24.3.80
CCU (80) 14	8.8.80
CCU (80) 17	12.9.80
CCU (80) 18	26.9.80
CCU (80) 19	8.10.80
E (80) 37 th Meeting, Minute 5	16.10.80
CCU (80) 20	24.10.80
CCU (80) 9 th Meeting, Minutes	30.10.80
E (80) 127	6.11.80
CCU (80) 21	10.11.80
CCU (80) 12 th Meeting, Minutes	19.11.80
CCU (80) 23 and 24	24.11.80
CCU (80) 13 th Meeting, Minutes	25.11.80
CCU (80) 27	11.12.80
CCU (81) 4 and 5	14.1.81
CCU (81) 10	16.1.81
CCU (81) 15	5.2.81
CCU (81) 17	13.2.81
CCU (81) 7 th Meeting, Minute 1	18.2.81
CCU (81) 18	20.2.81

The documents listed above, which were enclosed on this file, have been removed and destroyed. Such documents are the responsibility of the Cabinet Office. When released they are available in the appropriate **CAB** (CABINET OFFICE) CLASSES

Signed Wayland

Date 19 April 2011

PREM Records Team

Ref. A04339

MR LANKESTER

*Top Copy in
Gen Pd: March 81
Gen. Effects of Industrial Action*

Economic Effects of Industrial Action

You asked for advice on the Chancellor of the Exchequer's minute of 25 February to the Prime Minister in which he suggests that an official group should be established, centred on the Cabinet Office, to assess the economic significance of particular industrial threats which (because they do not create immediate threats to health and survival) do not come within the remit of the Civil Contingencies Unit (CCU) and, if possible, to identify the pressure points to which any contingency action might be directed. I understand that, though this minute is signed by the Chancellor, its principal begetter is the Financial Secretary.

2. The Chancellor suggests that this would not be a job for the CCU. I understand that the Home Secretary, while not expressing an opinion on the general proposition, is quite clear that this additional work would not be suitable for the CCU. I agree with this. The CCU is concerned with "essentials of life" situations, and is primarily an organisation for planning and coordinating responses "on the ground".

3. The starting point for the proposal is that there are particular industrial disputes (steel, the docks and possibly road haulage being the examples the Financial Secretary has in mind) which can cause severe economic damage but which fall outside CCU's "essentials of life" remit; the new group would identify such disputes in advance and pre-plan remedial action which might overcome or mitigate the economic penalties.

4. We have always taken the view that industrial disputes that did not engage the responsibility of CCU were best handled outside the central machinery. Thus, for the firemen's strike, the Home Office took the lead in planning and coordinating remedial action, setting up an operations room in continuous touch with the fire authorities and the Ministry of Defence, and consulted other departments as needed. Similarly in the steel strike the Department of Industry took the lead: it similarly set up an ad hoc emergency

operation, collecting information about the availability and movement of supplies and the state and survival capacity of the steel-using industries. I still think that this is right, and that as a general rule such situations are best managed by the department with primary responsibility for the industry concerned; I doubt whether there is a place for new central machinery for the sort of task the Chancellor's minute has in mind.

5. It is not very difficult at any given time to identify potentially troublesome disputes in advance, and we do not need new machinery for that. If it is a matter of planning remedial action, it seems to me that that is better done ad hoc, with the department primarily concerned clearly responsible in the lead. To the extent that advance planning can be undertaken ahead of the dispute breaking out, it should be; but industries in which disputes occur cover such a wide range, and the circumstances of disputes can vary and change so much, that I suspect that preparation is likely to be most effective if it is closely related to the circumstances of specific cases, and that contingency planning which is too hypothetical and advanced is not likely to help very much when the time comes. The risk is of creating a new piece of bureaucratic machinery which creates work out of proportion to the likely benefits.

6. What would perhaps be helpful would be some means of ensuring that, once the possibility of a dispute was foreseen, the department concerned would take action in good time to analyse its economic significance and to consider what (if any) action the Government (or the industry) could or should take to counteract its effects. This involves:

- (a) seeing the dispute coming;
- (b) identifying the department with the leading responsibility;
- (c) making sure that the Minister in charge of the department initiates analysis and action of the right kind in good time.

We do not need another central group to do that. The regular review of pay claims should look after (a). If the Prime Minister felt that there was any danger of Ministers failing to recognise their responsibility and to take appropriate action, that could be remedied either:

- (i) by having industrial affairs regularly on the agenda of Cabinet

or the Ministerial Committee on Economic Strategy, to give Ministers a chance to see what was coming and make sure that whatever could be done was done; or

- (ii) by the Prime Minister sending round a minute to her colleagues reminding them of their responsibility and of the need to take action in good time.

7. When the Prime Minister has had a chance to think about this, perhaps I could discuss it with her (perhaps at our next "business" meeting) and take instructions on the preparation of a draft reply to the Chancellor's minute - unless of course she is content with the general line of his minute, in which case I will prepare a reply accordingly.

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

2 March 1981

CONFIDENTIAL



Govt Mach JS

cc JV
JH

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

BF 5.3.81

MR. WRIGHT

I should be grateful for Cabinet Office advice on the enclosed minute from the Chancellor on the work of the Civil Contingencies Unit.

T. P. LANKESTER

25 February 1981



Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street, SW1P 3AG
01-233 3000

PRIME MINISTER

ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF INDUSTRIAL ACTION

The Civil Contingencies Unit has been doing valuable work in connection with threats of industrial action which, if they materialised, would damage the health and safety of the community. Water is the latest example. The CCU has also been considering the question of whether we should at least prepare for the possible need to extend the legal definition of an "emergency" under the Emergency Powers Act of 1920; I understand that, subject to the availability of parliamentary draftsmen, some illustrative work will be put in hand.

2. I am, however, concerned that, while the Civil Contingencies Unit does valuable work on the emergency measures needed to maintain supplies and services essential to the life of the nation in the event of a major industrial dispute, its remit does not extend to more general measures to maintain economic activity which, while vital to the prosperity of the nation, may not be an immediate matter of health or survival. During the steel strike, special steps were taken to monitor the economic effects as they arose; estimates were also made of the likely effects on production and national income in the longer run. In the case of the docks, similar arrangements were contemplated, but had not been fully activated before the threat receded. I wonder whether one should not go further and have some governmental machinery permanently available to assess the economic significance of particular industrial threats and also, if possible, to identify the pressure points to which any contingency action might be directed.

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3. One way of dealing with this might be to give the Civil Contingencies Unit a wider remit; but, since the work might be rather difficult, involving different skills, it could be right to think of a separate group, though it might still be centred on the Cabinet Office. This is something you might wish to consider.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'G.H.'.

(G.H.)

25 February 1981

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CONFIDENTIAL



See Mack

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & SOCIAL SECURITY
Alexander Fleming House, Elephant & Castle, London SE1 6BY
Telephone 01-407 5522
From the Joint Parliamentary Under Secretary of State

R

Jim Buckley Esq
Private Secretary to the
Lord President
Lord President's Office
Civil Service Department
Whitehall
London SW1

W/R

6 February 1981

Dear Jim,

CONTINGENCY PLANNING: USE OF VOLUNTEERS

I am sorry for our delay in acting on conclusion 2(ii) of CCU(80)9th Meeting.

We have examined the scope for bringing in retired management personnel to help out in the event of industrial action disrupting social security payments. There are serious practical constraints on the use of which such retired personnel could be put. In particular:

- a. few, if any, retired managers (or, indeed, other retired staff) have the expertise to man our computer centres;
- b. some 70,000 staff are employed in local offices and there are not enough retired managerial staff to cover a strike which was so widespread that it could not be handled with our present staff;
- c. legislation and procedures change fairly frequently; except for very recently retired staff a lengthy retraining programme would be necessary, which would take time, even if trainers could be found.

I am afraid therefore that Mrs Chalker does not see scope for using retired managerial staff in the sort of industrial action we envisage might be taken in this Department, although she would not rule it out if there were some

E. R.

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peculiar and, as yet, unforeseen form of action for which bringing back retired management personnel might be the answer.

Copies of this letter go to the Private Secretaries of CCU members.

Yours ever,

John T. Hughes

J T HUGHES
Private Secretary

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VLB

FILE

Gaut MacL

cc CO

17 November 1980

The Prime Minister has seen your letter of 14 November, about contingency measures against the possibility of a firemen's strike. She has noted the plans agreed in CCU.

I am sending a copy of this letter to David Wright (Cabinet Office).

M A PATTISON

J. F. Halliday, Esq.,
Home Office.

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WRP

FILE

VLB

cc CO

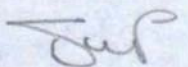
17 November 1980

The Prime Minister has seen and noted Mr. Fowler's minute of 14 November, about the steps he took on that day arising from the discussions in CCU on 13 November.

I am sending a copy of this letter to David Wright (Cabinet Office).

M A PATTISON

Anthony Mayer, Esq.,
Department of Transport.



C. A. Whitmore

CONFIDENTIAL

HOME OFFICE

QUEEN ANNE'S GATE LONDON SW1H 9AT

14 November 1980

Dear Clive,

*ms.**Prime Minister
content with these
contingency plans?*POSSIBLE FIREMEN'S STRIKE: CONTINGENCY MEASURES*MRP 14/11*

At the Home Secretary's request, I am reporting in this letter on the contingency measures that have been put in train in preparation for the possibility of a firemen's strike. The plans are based on the use of the armed forces to provide a skeleton fire service using the Green Goddess fire appliances held by Home Departments for civil defence purposes. (The normal fire-service "red" appliances are too complex for use by servicemen who will inevitably have only limited training.) The full military plan (S.C.A.R.A.B.) was used in the 1977-78 firemen's strike. It would take 14 days for full implementation, although some response would be available well before that.

The Fire Brigades Union have called a delegate conference on 21st November, and unless the employers have meanwhile given some indication of their readiness to honour the pay agreement the Executive's recommendation to the conference will be that after that date there should be a series of one day strikes - which might be national in coverage, and which after the first strike might take place without warning.

Home Department Ministers authorised on 11th November "four wise men" consultations between local authority chief executives, chief fire officers, and police and military commanders. C.C.U. met at Ministerial level last night and agreed the following additional measures.

- a) M.O.D. should forthwith shorten servicemen's notice and should plan to implement the full S.C.A.R.A.B. plan as soon as possible.
- b) The Home Departments should press ahead as urgently as possible, with assistance from the M.O.D., in making Green Goddesses ready for service.
- c) The M.O.D. should start training as soon as servicemen are available (on Monday of next week) and in preparation for that, the Ministry of Transport should make a Regulation to take effect from midnight on Sunday permitting the driving of Green Goddesses by soldiers under the age of 21.
- d) Since full S.C.A.R.A.B. would not be available at the time of the delegate conference in a week's time, M.O.D. would initially deploy, if it seemed desirable, a more

/limited

C. A. Whitmore, Esq.

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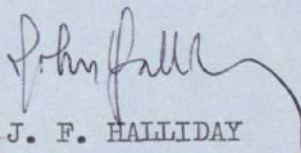
limited variant (S.C.A.R.A.B. Minor), which would keep the available vehicles and men in a number of regional locations so as to allow a fairly wide geographical coverage at a few hours' notice of localised strikes. This would give at least some capacity to cope with immediate strike action following the firemen's delegate conference. The full deployment would become available by the end of the following week.

- e) Troops, where available, could be committed to firefighting in response to a fire authority's request, at any time from now on, under an authorisation from the Home Minister concerned.
- f) No special announcement would be made about these measures. They would undoubtedly leak out and would be justified as being sensible precautions in the light of the firemen's declared intentions.
- g) If a strike did occur Home Departments' press offices should handle any press relations, in consultation with the Paymaster General, and there would be no need to activate the Central Press Unit.
- h) The necessary guidance to the local authorities would need, among other things, to make clear that the costs of providing emergency fire cover would fall on them, even though it was recognised that this might encourage an obstructive attitude in some cases. With intermittent one-day strikes there might be a need to provide double-banked cover for an extended period, and C.C.U. recognised that the financial arrangements for that might need further consideration with the local authorities in due course.
- i) There would need to be financial provision, on a contingency basis, for publicity to inform the public about any emergency arrangements. Beyond that it was decided that the Paymaster General should consider, in the light of experience in the last strike, whether a campaign of "fire prevention publicity" would be worthwhile.

Finally the Unit noted that the circumstances of this strike would be more difficult than last time because the Fire Officers were expected to side with the men. The tactic of intermittent one-day strikes would also be more troublesome to handle. Together with the prison dispute this would represent a major call on military manpower.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the Private Secretaries of C.C.U. Ministers and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours ever,


J. F. HALLIDAY

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Prime Minister

CONFIDENTIAL

*Mr Fowler's explanation
of today's events in
Green Goddesses.*

PRIME MINISTER

MF

MP 14/11

GREEN GODDESSES

You will want to know how I have acted on the discussion in CCU yesterday, following the ruling from the Law Officers, also yesterday, on the state of the law relating to Service drivers.

The general purpose is to make sure that Service drivers who may have to drive heavy goods vehicles in an emergency for civilian purposes are not put in a false position under the law. We are, of course, only considering Service drivers who are competent to drive heavy vehicles. We have a duty to protect their position if we ask them to drive heavy vehicles on civilian duty. Many service drivers are already suitably licensed and of the right age (over 21) for the civilian rules. But a substantial number are aged between 18 and 21. Our predecessors used such drivers in 1977, but were apparently unaware that they had left these Service drivers without legal cover in the event of accidents.

I was given to understand in the CCU yesterday, and have since confirmed, that military drivers might need to be used at any time from tomorrow onwards. The Defense Council has now made a resolution enabling them to be so used. I have therefore carried through my statutory consultation this morning. They showed that there is no objection on safety grounds from the AA, the RAC or the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, or from the trade or the Local Authorities. The Unions - TGWU and URTU - objected, as I expected. Their complaint is about short notice, threat to road

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safety (which is odd, since these servicemen drive heavy military vehicles anyway) and the effects of general Government policy on the firemens' dispute.

I concluded that I could not accept these objections and, after considering them, I have made and laid the required legislation. This enables heavy goods vehicles, including Green Goddesses, to be driven in this country by Service drivers, including those aged between 18 and 21.

I have issued a simple press notice explaining this legal point, and that it has arisen overnight.

I am sending copies of this minute to the Home Secretary, and other colleagues who took part in the CCU discussions, and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

NORMAN FOWLER

14 November 1980

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RESTRICTED

file

MR INGHAMcc Mr Hoskyns
Mr Duguid
Mr Gaffin
Mr PattisonCIVIL CONTINGENCIES UNIT

I mentioned yesterday that Mr. Hoskyns had suggested that it would be useful if I attended meetings of the Civil Contingencies Unit, because of my concern with industrial action in relation to pay; and we agreed that this would be appropriate, and that I would keep an eye also on the press arrangements during civil contingencies, up to the point at which a particular contingency arose which would require the presence of either you or Mr Gaffin.

It so happens that the meeting which will take place tomorrow is, unusually for the CCU, a meeting of Ministers only, called by the Home Secretary with the particular purpose of clearing the extent to which Ministers are prepared to make arrangements for the use of volunteers. The Cabinet Office are not prepared to let me attend for that, but have noted that I will be the No.10 representative on meetings of the CCU which are either mixed, or purely at official level.

(JOHN VEREKER)

29 October 1980Confidential filing

You'd better keep these papers,
but I'd be grateful if you
would note my continuing
interest in the CCU

Jv
29/10



From the Secretary of State

J Chilcot Esq
Private Secretary to the
Secretary of State for the Home Department
Home Office
50 Queen Anne's Gate
London, SW1H 9AT

2
HF 115

30 April 1980

Dear John,

THE USE OF THE TAVR DURING INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES

My Secretary of State has seen your Secretary of State's minute to the Prime Minister of 28 April on the use of the TAVR during industrial disputes and, as there has been no written support for his views, does not wish to press for a meeting on the subject.

I am copying this letter to the Private Secretaries of E Committee Members, to the Private Secretaries to the Attorney General and Sir Robert Armstrong and to Mr Moore, Cabinet Office.

Yours ever,

Nicholas McInnes

N McINNES
Private Secretary

CONFIDENTIAL

2



~~Prime Minister~~

In view of
Trade letter of 30 April,
NBPM

PRIME MINISTER

TZ, 15

I am told that, in view
of this minute, Mr Nott may
no longer wish to press his
case. If this is confirmed, we
will take it off the agenda
for E.

THE USE OF THE TAVR DURING INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES

Flay A

I have seen copies of John Nott's minute to you of 9th April 29/4
and the Attorney General's letter of 15th April. I am writing on
behalf of Francis Pym and myself to let you know our views.

We appreciate John Nott's feelings but his arguments neither
dispel our doubts about the practicability and effectiveness of
legislating in this field nor allay our concern about the
repercussions it would have on the TAVR.

We are not persuaded that we should depart from our
recommendation in E(80)24 that the TAVR should not be used in
industrial disputes.

Copies of this minute go to other members of E and to
Sir Michael Havers and Sir Robert Armstrong.

Halls

28

April 1980

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01-405 7641 Extn 3201

ROYAL COURTS OF JUSTICE

LONDON, WC2A 2LL

15 April 1980

Cont. March 2
PRIME MINISTER
As small point on the TAVR.

MJS
15/4
PA
MJS

The Rt Hon Margaret Thatcher MP *mt*
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
LONDON S W 1

Dear Prime Minister,

USE OF TERRITORIAL AND VOLUNTEER RESERVES DURING INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES

(attached)

I have seen a copy of John Nott's Minute to you of 9 April regarding the conclusions drawn in paper E(80)24.

In paragraph 2 of the Minute it is suggested that TAVR units may be called up to replace the Regular Army in their military duties when the Regular Army is maintaining public services interrupted by a strike. I would like to take the opportunity to emphasize that the TAVR as a whole may only be called out in the circumstances referred to in paragraph 3 of the Annex to paper E(80)24, viz where a national danger is imminent or a great emergency has arisen. I do not think that this requirement is likely to be met in any but the most exceptional industrial situation (for example a general strike). Additionally individual TAVR men may volunteer to be liable to be called out for periods of not less than 6 months, but as explained in paragraph 4 of the Annex, this is only for Army Service.

The main question raised by John Nott is one of policy and is, I think, more for William Whitelaw and Francis Pym than myself.

I have copied this letter to John Nott and the other recipients of his Minute.

Yours wv.
Michael

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PRIME MINISTER

Prime Minister *Govt Machinery*

*In view of his
minute of dissent,
we are arranging
a discussion in E.*

MA

*12
"14*

THE USE OF TERRITORIAL AND VOLUNTEER RESERVES DURING
INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES

Flay A

I disagree with the conclusion drawn in the paper E(80)24, and I thought I should let you know my views even though I understand that it may not be worthwhile to hold a meeting on the subject.

2. From Michael Havers' legal advice, it appears that we can use the Regular Army to maintain public services interrupted by a strike, and can call up TAVR Units to replace them in their military duties, but cannot use the TAVR directly to maintain public services. This seems an undesirable situation as well as an illogical one, and I do not think we should rule out the possibility of amending legislation to change it.

3. Besides other Western democracies we are sorely lacking in any kind of "citizens army", and I do not think there is any principle which should make us more reluctant to use the TAVR in dire circumstances than the regular army. Indeed, I see two advantages:

- i) it would enable us to respond more flexibly to civil emergencies. So long as we have to rely on the Regular Army alone our response will be severely constrained by lack of resources, especially if two such emergencies coincided, as they easily could in the winter months. This could leave us with no alternative but to buy off a public service strike in circumstances which amounted to abandoning our policies.



- ii) Removing regular soldiers from their military duties cannot be good for our defence, even if they are replaced by volunteers.

4. On the assumption that we shall not be compelling members of the TAVR to undertake such duties, then it ought to be less objectionable on libertarian grounds too to use them than to use regular troops to man civilian services. In practice the unions are more strongly opposed to volunteers because their presence, unlike that of soldiers acting under orders, can be a living demonstration of the unpopularity of the unions' cause. I believe we should prefer them for the same reason.

5. I recognise of course the invidiousness of involving the TA in controversial disputes, and I should certainly not advocate using them except to maintain essential public services. But we should not succumb to the union propaganda that represents strikes against such services as in the same category as those against the commercial interests of a private employer, and attacks Governments' attempts to maintain them as "strike-breaking". Such strikes are indeed aimed at the public itself, and I believe our response to them should always be designed to ensure that the public perceives this. Were there to be a major breakdown of services I think historians would judge us ill if we failed to provide an ultimate reserve body to keep public services going.

6. If there is currently a legislative bar to this course of action I would be in favour of amending legislation. This might provoke some controversy from the unions, but I believe we could seek the agreement of the Opposition— *indeed there might be occasion for asking the official opposition about their views.*



7. I am copying this minute to the other members of E, and to Francis Pym, Michael Havers and Sir Robert Armstrong.

JN

J. N.

Department of Trade
9 April 1980

Get Mad

CONFIDENTIAL

ds



cc FCO	HMT
D/I	LPO
D/Em	MAFF
D/Td	D/En
CSO	MOD
LOD	CO

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

2 April 1980

The Prime Minister has read the recent paper circulated to E Committee on the possibility of using the Territorial Army Volunteer Reserve in industrial disputes - E(80) 24. She is content with the conclusion of this paper that the TAVR should not be considered for use in industrial disputes, and unless substantive comments on the paper are received by 11 April, she will regard the paper as approved.

I am sending copies of this letter to Private Secretaries to members of E Committee, Brian Norbury (Ministry of Defence), Bill Beckett (Law Officers' Department) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

I. P. LANKESTER

John Chilcot, Esq.,
Home Office.

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AKC

PI



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & SOCIAL SECURITY
Alexander Fleming House, Elephant & Castle, London SE1 6BY
Telephone 01-407 5522

From the Secretary of State for Social Services

J A Chilcot Esq
Private Secretary
Home Office
50 Queen Anne's Gate
London SW1

1 April 1980

Dear John,

THE USE OF TERRITORIAL AND VOLUNTEER RESERVES DURING
INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES - E(80)24

My Secretary of State has read with interest the paper circulated by the Home Secretary, the Secretary of State for Defence and the Attorney General. He agrees with the conclusions reached in paragraph 6 and supports the recommendations in paragraph 7.

I am copying this letter to the private secretaries to the Prime Minister, other members of E Committee, the Secretary of State for Defence and the Attorney General, and to David Wright (Cabinet Office).

Yours ever
D

D BRERETON
Private Secretary

Galt Muel

R

1/24



CONFIDENTIAL

Prime Minister

*Agree that this paper
be taken as agreed
unless colleagues have
any comments?*

Ref. A01854

MR. LANKESTER

*Yes
Ans*

*12
1/4*

Use of the Territorial Army Volunteer Reserve

At a meeting of E on Tuesday, 4th December last year the Home Secretary, Secretary of State for Defence and the Attorney General were invited to consider the case for using the Territorial Army Volunteer Reserve in industrial disputes. They have now completed their review and have circulated their paper, E(80) 24, which concludes that the TAVR should not be considered for use in industrial disputes.

2. The Cabinet Office was consulted in the preparation of the paper. It seems unlikely that Ministers will wish to object to its conclusions. If the Prime Minister is content with them, you may wish to write to members of E suggesting that unless comments on the paper are received by, say, 11th April, the paper will be taken as approved.

(D.J. Wright)

1st April, 1980

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

CIVIL CONTINGENCIES UNIT

I have shown the Prime Minister your minute AO1840 of 31 March 1980, and she agrees that the Secretary of State for Employment should act, if necessary, as Chairman of the Civil Contingencies Unit in the absence abroad of the Home Secretary from 3-21 April.

E. A. WHITMORE

1 April 1980



Prime Minister. |

Consent?

full

31st

020
Ref. A01840

PRIME MINISTER

Yes and.

Civil Contingencies Unit

During his absence abroad from 3rd to 21st April, the Home Secretary suggests that the Secretary of State for Employment should act, in case of need, as chairman of the Civil Contingencies Unit. This seems sensible. The job requires an authoritative senior Minister, and Mr. Prior is also departmentally involved in almost all important CCU matters. If available the Secretary of State for the Environment would have been a good candidate; but he too will be abroad during much of Mr. Whitelaw's absence.

2. May I let Mr. Whitelaw and Mr. Prior know that you agree?

RA

(Robert Armstrong)

31st March, 1980

CONFIDENTIAL



GA Duguid
Govt Machinery

12
12/11/79

ATTORNEY GENERAL

On 4 December the Ministerial Committee on Economic Strategy (E(79)17th Meeting) asked me to consider with you whether any further changes were desirable in the existing emergency powers legislation.

My minute of 29 November to the Prime Minister recorded that consultation between our officials had not identified any practical defect in either the 1920 or the 1964 Act. Similarly, the routine review by Departments of the draft regulations to be made under the 1920 Act did not expose any need for substantive change. The question of the use of the TA is being considered separately by the Ministry of Defence.

As things stand, therefore, I still have no proposals to amend the legislation, but I should be glad if you could let me know of any point which you think would merit further examination.

I am sending copies of this minute to the Prime Minister and the other members of E Committee, and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

[Handwritten signature]

7 December 1979

CONFIDENTIAL



Govt Machinery

10 DOWNING STREET

Prime Minister

Mr. Pym, Ltd Mansfield,

Mr. Jenkins, Mr. Forde,


and Mr. Mansfield have

been invited to visit

them.

R.

4-12-79



CONFIDENTIAL

Ref. A0823

PRIME MINISTER

Contingency Planning: Use of Volunteers and Central
Press Unit

(E(79) 71 and E(79) 62)

BACKGROUND

Both these papers were commissioned at the meeting of E Committee on 16th October (E(79) 11th Meeting).

2. On volunteers colleagues felt at the last discussion that there was much more scope for using volunteers in industrial action than the previous Government had been prepared to contemplate. Mr. Whitelaw's paper describes the conclusions of a review by the Civil Contingencies Unit (CCU) in which officials were asked to cast the net widely, and to take soundings of their own Ministers before reporting to the Unit. The basic conclusion is that volunteers might have a role in a number of specific areas (paragraph 2 of the paper) and that in order to find out how big a role, consultations with the employers in these fields are needed. There seems little scope for using the "uniformed" volunteer services, although it is conceivable that members of the Territorial Army might be willing to volunteer for additional duties in support of the Regular Army when engaged in tasks supporting the civil Ministries. The arrangements for mobilising volunteer effort cannot be decided until the consultations with employers have been undertaken.

3. The report points out that there are disadvantages, as well as advantages, in using volunteers. For example it could put at risk the co-operation of supervisory staff, and so compromise the maintenance of the whole service they are trying to help.

4. On the Central Press Unit (CPU) Mr. Maude was asked to prepare a contingency plan for establishing a CPU to improve the Government's handling of publicity in relation to industrial disputes. This is a wider remit than the Civil Contingencies field itself, which is concerned only with threats to essential services. Government publicity in industrial disputes might be needed in advance of the dispute actually commencing, to ensure that facts at issue are



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brought out, and there might also be a role in presenting the Government's case as employer in a Civil Service dispute. Mr. Maude proposes a Unit with a co-ordinating function, with executive responsibility left entirely with Departments concerned. The Unit would be chaired by himself, and would comprise Information Officers from all relevant Departments, and No. 10. It could be activated either by a request from yourself, or from the Chairman of the Civil Contingencies Unit, or the Committee on Industrial Relations in the Civil Service, Mr. Whitelaw or Lord Soames respectively.

HANDLING

5. Although both relate to contingency planning, you may find it convenient to take discussion on the two papers separately.

VOLUNTEERS

6. On Volunteers you might ask Mr. Whitelaw to introduce his paper (E(79) 71) and then seek general comments on the points the paper raises.

7. You might clarify first whether colleagues agree that the areas identified in paragraph 2 are the right ones. Although paragraph 3 says that work is continuing on the scope for volunteers in five other areas, there is no real prospect in those areas.

8. Then you might ask whether colleagues agree to consultations (paragraphs 4 and 5). There is the publicity angle to be considered, and the proposal is to start with local authority and public sector employers only. The Committee has agreed previously that consultations could take place with Health Authorities about the use of volunteers in the NHS.

9. You might then turn to the specific issues identified in paragraph 7 of Mr. Whitelaw's paper.

(a) Use of the Territorial Army

Mr. Pym will have views, and perhaps the Attorney General. But this seems the best hope of using a disciplined force, in their units. They would be in a supporting role to the army, and so would add to resources in tackling the strike only to the extent that the army was already overstretched by the demands upon them.



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(b) Special Constables

Should Chief Constables be encouraged to use Specials more, - and to be given more help in recruiting them - to release police for sensitive tasks in handling industrial disruption? This question has wider implications: there are good grounds for developing the role of the Special Constabulary as a voluntary service quite apart from their value in emergencies; but the Police Federation would be very resistant.

(c) The Royal Observer Corps and Auxiliary Coastguards.

Agree not worth pursuing?

(d) Volunteer Centre Guidelines.

Devised in consultation with the unions and having wide backing from the voluntary organisations. Using volunteers on this basis should ensure that there would be no objection from potential critics. But to accept it in advance for all cases would involve the Government in giving up too much flexibility.

(e) Premises for mobilising volunteers.

Decisions to await results of consultation?

(f) Role of a Central Press Unit.

To be discussed as a separate item.

(g) Civil Defence Organisation.

The organisation no longer exists, and when it did its justification was primarily a war defence. Is it worth a further look to see whether it could possibly be justified allowing for civil emergency as well as war time use, or is the cost out of scale with any possible benefit?

CONCLUSION ON VOLUNTEERS

10. The decisions that you have reached on each of the items discussed above will form the conclusions.

CENTRAL PRESS UNIT

11. You might ask Mr. Maude to introduce his paper (E(79) 62). You might deal first with the general principle of a unit, and then separately with the question of finance for any publicity which they recommend.



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12. It is envisaged that the proposed unit should do two jobs:

- (1) To ensure that the substance of a dispute - with its likely consequences - ~~is~~ ~~was~~ presented as effectively as possible to the media and the public.
- (2) Once the dispute reached the stage of an emergency, to publicise and explain the Government's plans for safeguarding essential services.

Do colleagues agree that it is right to have the same unit for both jobs? They are rather different, and are likely to involve different people and different tasks. The first will require preparation of detailed material relating to the substance and handling of a claim, monitoring of media reporting of the claim and its handling, so far as they affect the Government, and action to prompt speedy and effective reaction or response (in so far as Government reaction or response is appropriate) to published stories or interviews as they occur. The second will be a much more straightforward job of co-ordinating and disseminating information. It is arguable that the Unit proposed in paragraph 3(ii) of the Paymaster General's paper is right for the second but not for the first, and that the first needs something different: a small number of people, not necessarily all Information Officers, who should include somebody from the Department of Employment and somebody from the "sponsoring" department of the industry affected, who need not necessarily be engaged solely on this work but who can be activated when the need arises and may for the period of a dispute need to give all their time to it, and who should be supervised by a Minister - either the Paymaster General or a Minister in one of the departments represented on the group. It is not clear that there is a role in this for collective meetings of a number of Information Officers. And there would be something to be said for not compromising the effectiveness and acceptability of the machinery which handles press relations aspects of emergency situations by putting on to it the different task of advising on the role of Government public relations in the course of an industrial dispute.

13. There is a separate issue of how publicity should be financed.

Mr. Biffen will wish to speak. But the sums involved will be fairly small, and will be urgently needed at the time. So although the Unit cannot have carte blanche they need some workable arrangement with the Treasury.



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CONCLUSION ON CENTRAL PRESS UNIT

14. Subject to the discussion, the Committee may agree that a Central Press Unit should be established, to be activated as suggested in the paper, or as otherwise agreed in discussion; and that Mr. Biffen and Mr. Maude should agree suitable arrangements for controlling (and permitting) Departmental expenditure on advertising which result from the work of the Unit.

RA

(Robert Armstrong)

3rd December, 1979

cc Nat Ind Line 79 - Coal.

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD
WHITEHALL PLACE, LONDON SW1A 2HH



From the Minister

CONFIDENTIAL

The Prime Minister

As you know I shall be involved in discussions in the Community on Tuesday and shall not be able to attend the meeting of the Economic Strategy Committee.

I am in favour of a Central Press Unit for use in emergencies - E(79)62. Food and agricultural supplies would be affected in many emergencies and - although I accept that there is no occasion for my Department to be included in the regular membership of the Unit - I should want us brought in when food and agricultural problems were likely to be in question.

In case the discussion on miners' pay should turn to contingency planning for the consequences of industrial action in the mines and the spin-off into electricity supply, I should like to register that food production and distribution would be greatly affected by cuts in electricity supply. It is important to maintain full production as long as possible, otherwise our capacity to hold out should the situation deteriorate would be badly affected. I should hope therefore that contingency plans will wherever possible provide priorities and that food will have first priority.

I am sending copies of this letter to members of E Committee, the Secretary of State for Scotland, the Paymaster General, the Minister of Transport and Sir Robert Armstrong.

Peter Walker
30 November 1979

CONFIDENTIAL



Prime Minister

sub

12 note.

12

20/11

PRIME MINISTER

REVIEW OF CONTINGENCY PLANNING

On 16 October the Ministerial Committee on Economic Strategy (E(79)11th Meeting) asked me to consider further, in consultation with the Attorney General, whether any changes in the Emergency Powers Act were desirable in the light of certain apparent deficiencies identified by the Party when in Opposition.

Officials in the Home Office have consulted the Law Officers' Department but have been unable to find any practical deficiencies in either the 1920 or 1964 Emergency Powers Acts. I have no proposals to amend either.

We may perhaps have been concerned about the possibility of deficiencies in the Statutory Instrument containing Emergency Regulations which is brought into operation following the proclamation of a state of emergency. But the routine annual review by all Departments of those regulations has just been completed, and no proposals for changes of substance have been suggested.

I am sending copies of this minute to our colleagues on E Committee, and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Wors
29

November 1979

CONFIDENTIAL



cc: Mr Duguid
G.V. Mochinson 2
P.M. Austin

Re note.

Re
7/11

Handwritten signature

CONFIDENTIAL

PRIME MINISTER

MOVEMENT OF COAL TO POWER STATIONS

At E Committee on 16 October you asked me for a report on the movement of coal by rail to power stations.

About 80% of power station coal is transported by rail. The British Railways Board has agreed to give priority to this traffic and has undertaken to move 62 million tonnes to CEGB power stations in 1979/80. By 15 October, 40.1 million tonnes had been moved - about 0.8 million tonnes above the planned figure and 3.6 million tonnes more than in the same period last year. This global figure masks shortfalls in some areas, but overall the picture is encouraging and I understand that the CEGB are very satisfied with the Railway Board's performance. The Board's ability to maintain its performance, however, and to improve further on the planned level of carryings depends to a significant extent on the NCB mining sufficient coal and on the arrival of the proposed coal imports.

My Department has been receiving regular reports from the Railways Board and will continue to monitor progress.

CONFIDENTIAL



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I am sending copies of this minute to other members of E Committee and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'N. Fowler'.

NORMAN FOWLER
7 November 1979

CONFIDENTIAL

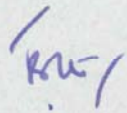
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PRIME MINISTER

Review of Contingency Planning - Supplementary Brief
(E(79) 48)

The Paymaster General is sick and will not be at the meeting of E on Tuesday. Paragraph 2 f. of this paper, on publicity, suggests a new remit to the Paymaster General. He has seen the paper, and we understand that he is content to accept this remit if the Committee so wishes. You may wish to tell the Committee this when it reaches this item.


(John Hunt)

15th October 1979

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PRIME MINISTER

Review of Contingency Planning
(E(79) 48)

BACKGROUND

This paper does not seek any major decisions. Its main purpose is to inform the Committee, although a number of decisions on points of detail are needed to allow planning to proceed. The main issues are summarised in the Home Secretary's cover note, and you need not read all the other material unless you wish to do so. But there are some specific areas - to which I shall draw attention later - which are worth a closer look.

2. The paper does two things; it reports on the annual review of the contingency plans in the light of past experience, and on this occasion takes account of the differences in planning that flow from the change in Government. It also reports in paragraph 16 of the officials' paper on the particular state of fuel supplies and the coal industry, in response to a remit from E Committee at the meeting on 27th September (E(79) 9th Meeting).

3. In addition to the points in the paper Mr. Whitelaw may also raise the state of planning against disruption in the Prisons against the possibility of prison staff withdrawing their labour because they are not satisfied when the May Committee inquiry report is published on 31st October. So far the Home Office have assumed the use of police in a support role. The Northern Ireland and Scottish Offices propose the use of servicemen - although this is likely to be strongly opposed by the Secretary of State for Defence. It now seems that the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) are opposing the England and Wales plan, and their President will be seeing Mr. Whitelaw on Monday. Mr. Whitelaw will presumably only be able to report on the current position - and in any case other members of the Committee will not be prepared for a substantive discussion. If the matter is raised you need do no more than invite Mr. Whitelaw in consultation with Ministers concerned to report to you with a co-ordinated plan as soon as possible.

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HANDLING

4. I suggest that you should ask the Home Secretary to introduce the paper briefly, and then use the sub-paragraphs in paragraph 2 of his cover paper as pegs on which to hang discussion.

Paragraph 2a. Review of Plans


5. The Committee should note the limitations as well as the range of contingency planning. In virtually all cases the co-operation of supervisory staff is needed. In some cases the co-operation of other groups is needed e.g. Post Office staff can - if they co-operate - be used to reduce the effects of certain forms of civil service action. Given these requirements the plans can often delay the worst effects of the action for several weeks. But if, for example, power engineers or water industry supervisors, did not co-operate, conditions would be intolerable within hours or days. Many plans involve the use of servicemen. There is always some risk - particularly if they use civilian equipment such as ambulances or fire-engines - that using them may intensify the industrial action: but this largely depends on the public mood at the time.

Paragraph 2b. Semi-political Disruption

6. The Home Secretary has gone into the question of "political" strikes this winter with some care. His conclusion is that the existing contingency plans will serve for these as for other strikes.

Paragraph 2c. The Coal Industry

7. You may wish to look at this in rather more depth in view of the current miners' pay claim. If the miners strike, they are likely also to place an effective block on coal movements. Thus the endurance period depends on power station coal stocks. The graph at Annex B shows that they are low compared to recent years - but not far below the 10 ^{year} ~~per cent~~ average. Oil stocks at power stations are relatively high but even so are only "worth" - in energy terms - about 15-20 per cent of coal stocks - so that their effect on the "endurance period" is fairly marginal. Thus the paper concludes that after about 4 weeks electricity supply would begin to be disrupted - and would continue


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on a reducing scale for a few weeks more. In practice of course reductions in consumption would be needed at a much earlier stage in order to spin-out the endurance period.

8. Emergency Powers, under the Energy Act, made by an Order in Council without a "State of Emergency" declaration, could help to control use of coal and other energy. There is no effective means available to increase power station coal stocks once a major dispute has started. Endurance can only be increased by restricting electricity usage.

Paragraph 2d. Use of Volunteers

9. Paragraph 15 (iii) of the officials' paper discusses the advantages and disadvantages of using volunteers. Mr. Whitelaw suggests that for the moment they should be considered in the NHS only, and the position kept under review.

Paragraph 2e. Consultations

10. Effective planning requires a degree of pre-consultation outside Government service. If this became known the unions will probably claim provocation. The Home Secretary nevertheless recommends that the Government should, in prudence, enter into consultations where necessary and defend its action if this became public knowledge.

Paragraph 2f. Publicity

11. On past experience it is sometimes difficult for Government to get its case across effectively. The union's statements usually make the best newspaper stories. Mr. Whitelaw suggests more effort on this - with plans for a Central Press Unit to co-ordinate briefings in a time of widespread industrial action - rather than leaving it to Departmental and regional Press offices.

CONCLUSIONS

12. The specific decisions which Mr. Whitelaw requests are listed in paragraph 3 of his paper (and in more detail in paragraphs 26-33 of the official paper). Subject to unexpected points arising in discussion there would seem to be no reason for the Committee to dissent from any of these recommendations. In addition, if the prisons point referred to above is raised you may wish simply to take note and invite Mr. Whitelaw in consultation with the other Ministers concerned to report to you with a co-ordinated plan as soon as possible.

12th October 1979

CONFIDENTIAL

Gov Mach



QUEEN ANNE'S GATE LONDON SW1H 9AT

10 October 1979

copy to Mr. and
Home Office letter of
27/9 to Mr. James

NBM
R 11/10

Dear Secretary of State

CONTINGENCY PLANNING IN THE HEALTH SERVICE

The replies which I have received to my letter of 27 September all indicate that our colleagues are content that consultation should now take place with Health Authorities about contingency planning against possible industrial action in the Health Service. You may take it therefore that you have authority to proceed with these consultations.

In conducting these consultations officials will no doubt take account of the comments which our colleagues have made, particularly as regards the need to keep the consultations confidential and as regards the line to be taken should they leak - ie that the Government has an overriding responsibility to maintain essential services and the consultations are simply part of sensible and routine planning and in no way imply that the Government is expecting disruption in the Health Service. Officials will also need to take account of Francis Pym's comments as regards the way in which the contingency plans for the use of servicemen to drive ambulances are presented to Health Authorities.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister and members of E Committee, the Secretaries of State for Defence, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, the Paymaster-General and Sir John Hunt.

Yours sincerely

AJ Jenkin

Approved by the Home Secretary
and signed in his absence.

The Rt Hon Patrick Jenkin MP

CONFIDENTIAL

9 October 1979

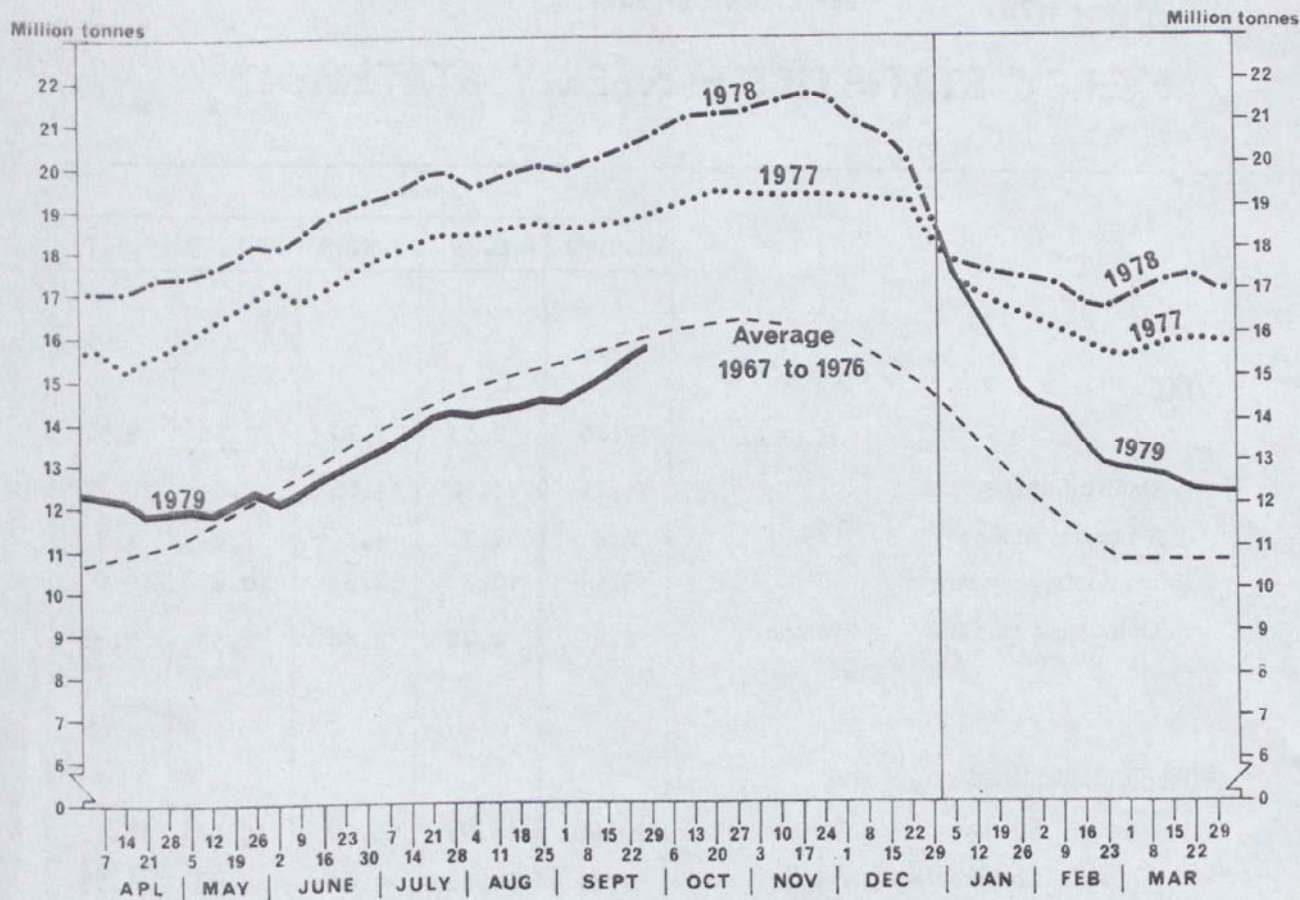
DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

ENERGY STATISTICS — WEEKLY STATEMENT⁽¹⁾

			Week ending				
			30.9.78	8.9.79	15.9.79	22.9.79	29.9.79
COAL							
Production ⁽²⁾	(m tonnes)		2.40	2.53	2.30	2.58	2.57
Undistributed stocks	"		11.26	11.10	11.00	10.89	10.77
Voluntary absence ⁽³⁾	(%)		4.4	4.7	4.1	4.8	4.8
Involuntary absence ⁽³⁾	"		13.1	10.7	10.3	10.6	10.6
Output per manshift overall ⁽³⁾	(tonnes)		2.21	2.28	2.24	2.33	2.33
POWER STATIONS							
Coal: Stocks	(m tonnes)		20.61	14.77	15.00	15.34	15.73
Consumption	"		1.41	1.43	1.48	1.50	1.55
Receipts	"		1.60	1.78	1.72	1.84	1.93
Oil: ⁽⁴⁾ Stocks	"		1.04	1.34	1.36	1.52	1.55
Consumption	"		0.16	0.11	0.12	0.11	0.12
Receipts	"		0.13	0.18	0.14	0.28	0.15
Electricity supplied ⁽⁵⁾	(GWh)		4,110	3,927	4,025	4,126	4,218
Temperature corrected	"		(4,172)	(3,986)	(3,958)	(4,064)	(4,161)
GAS INDUSTRY							
Oil: Stocks	(m tonnes)		0.22	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12
Gas: Sent out ⁽⁶⁾	(m therms)		232	194	211	228	252

⁽¹⁾ Great Britain unless otherwise stated. All latest figures subject to revision⁽²⁾ Including opencast⁽³⁾ NCB mines only⁽⁴⁾ Oil fired boilers only⁽⁵⁾ Steam stations including nuclear⁽⁶⁾ Natural and town gas

COAL STOCKS AT PUBLIC SUPPLY POWER STATIONS IN GREAT BRITAIN



Y SWYDDFA GYMREIG
GWYDYR HOUSE
WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2ER
Tel. 01-233 3000 (Switsfwrdd)
01-233 6106 (Llinell Union)



Oddi wrth Ysgrifennydd Gwladol Cymru The Rt Hon Nicholas Edwards MP

Pat. March
WELSH OFFICE
GWYDYR HOUSE
WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2ER
Tel. 01-233 3000 (Switchboard)
01-233 6106 (Direct Line)
From The Secretary of State for Wales

CONFIDENTIAL

4 October 1979

Don Wilce

R. 15/10

CONTINGENCY PLANNING IN THE HEALTH SERVICE

Thank you for sending me a copy of your letter of 27 September 1979 to Patrick Jenkin.

As you will know, the original initiative for consultations with the Health Authorities came from my Department jointly with the DHSS. Therefore, I need hardly say that I am very much in favour of the course you propose. I recognise that this might result in Union complaints, but if your prediction that they will get to hear of this exercise proves to be correct, I am convinced that we could, and should, present our actions as prudent precautions taken in the interest of patients.

I am copying this letter to the recipients of yours.

J. Owen

Nick

Rt Hon William Whitelaw MP
Home Secretary
Home Office
50 Queen Anne's Gate
LONDON
SW1H 9AD

CONFIDENTIAL



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2HB

TELEPHONE 01-218 9000
DIRECT DIALLING 01-218 2111/3

CONFIDENTIAL

MO 19/1

4th October 1979

Dear Willie,

Thank you for your letter of 27th September about contingency planning in the Health Service.

As far as the plan for replacement of hospital ancillaries is concerned I am prepared to see the suggested consultation with the Health Authorities taking place. I accept that it is only through such consultation that we shall be able to be satisfied that any plans for the use of Servicemen in this field are both realistic and workable.

As for consultation on plans for the use of Servicemen to drive either National Health Service ambulances or Service ambulances, I would also be content to see this taking place, provided that it is made clear to the Health authorities that they are not necessarily being given a choice as between the two plans but that rather we are testing the water to see which of the plans would be preferable to the majority of Health Authorities and for what reasons. I believe that we must reserve to central Government any final decision as to which of the two plans we should go for or whether we can live with some combination of both. On this latter point,

/ you ...

The Rt Hon William Whitelaw CH, MC, MP

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you will not be surprised to hear that I have some reservations about trying to implement two separate plans in various parts of the country to deal with one emergency; but I will reserve any final view on this until we have the outcome of the consultation with the Health Authorities.

I am copying this letter to the copy addressees of yours.

James Lovelock

Francis Pym

Francis Pym

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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & SOCIAL SECURITY

Alexander Fleming House, Elephant & Castle, London SE1 6BY

Telephone 01-407 5522

From the Secretary of State for Social Services

The Rt Hon William Whitelaw CH MC MP
 Secretary of State for the Home Department
 Home Office
 50 Queen Anne's Gate
 London SW1

3 October 1979

Dear Willie,

CONTINGENCY PLANNING IN THE HEALTH SERVICE

Thank you for your letter of 27 September about contingency planning in the NHS.

Of the issues you raise, the first - the review of plans to use Service personnel on general duties in the NHS - seems to me to be clear-cut. Existing plans were drawn up without the benefit of advice from those with operational responsibility for the health service - the health authorities themselves. Without that advice the plans can only be a paper exercise and could not be put into operation without, in all probability, last-minute consultation and consequent change. We simply do not know, for example, the extent to which health authorities think that the tasks earmarked for troops could be performed by volunteers from inside the NHS, outside volunteers (assuming Ministerial approval is forthcoming), supervisors or retired men. Without that knowledge we have had to make inspired guesses which, with the best will in the world, are bound to be wrong in some instances.

I am convinced that early consultation is essential. Whatever the possible consequences of news of these consultations leaking out, they could not possibly be worse than the consequences of trying to consult during or in the run-up to a dispute. We would, of course, do our level best to ensure that the consultations stayed confidential, though this cannot be guaranteed, as your letter recognises.

The second issue is that of the case of Service personnel in the ambulance service. If anything, the need for consultations with the NHS on this issue is even more urgent than on the question of troops for general duties. Already, as health authorities begin to consider ways of cutting out restrictive practices in the ambulance service in line with the recommendations of the Clegg Commission, there are signs of trouble ahead.

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But the issue is complex. For my part, I would prefer to see a plan adopted under which Service personnel drove NHS ambulances. In consulting the NHS, I would ask my officials to argue for this plan. But it has to be accepted that if the general view of NHS management, or of a significant proportion of it, is that the plan is unworkable, we would have to make plans for using Service personnel in Service ambulances, as was the case last winter. Depending on the outcome of consulting the NHS we could either adopt on a national basis whichever plan seemed to carry the greatest support in the NHS, or (and I recognise that there may be serious practical difficulties) allow each Ambulance Authority to opt firmly now for one plan or the other. Before reaching decisions on these issues, we need to consult Health Authorities and to do so quickly. I hope, therefore, that colleagues will agree to my officials, in conjunction with MOD, proceeding urgently with these consultations.

Meanwhile, I can assure colleagues that we have already done a great deal of work in overhauling our contingency planning as far as we are able without consulting the NHS. We have also discussed with the NHS the sort of advice and guidance it would be proper and practicable to give NHS management in the event of a major dispute. And we have urged on them the importance of making their own contingency plans to mitigate the worst effects of disputes, whether national or local.

I am copying this letter to the recipients of yours.

Yours ever
Patel



Govt Machinery

SCOTTISH OFFICE
WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AU

3 OCT 1979

Rylo

The Rt Hon William Whitelaw CH MC MP
Secretary of State for the Home Department
Home Office
Queen Anne's Gate
LONDON
SW1H 9AT

3 October 1979

CONFIDENTIAL

CONTINGENCY PLANNING IN THE HEALTH SERVICE

Having seen a copy of your letter of 27 September to Patrick Jenkin, my comments on the two points you raise are as follows:

- (1) As regards general duties in the NHS I doubt whether the situation will arise in practice where it would be necessary to contemplate the use of troops. Our experience last winter suggested that volunteers from outwith the NHS was as far as we would have to go - and even that as a last resort. Nevertheless I agree that we might at this stage decide formally to seek the views of the Health Authorities on this question.
- (2) On ambulances the position in Scotland is simpler than in the South. Ambulance services throughout Scotland are provided by the Common Services Agency (a statutory body which provides various supporting services in the health field on behalf of the Secretary of State and health bodies). We already know the Agency's view. They are firmly of the view based on experience last winter that in combination with the police (and if necessary volunteers) ambulance services can be maintained at the required minimum level. The use of troops for this purpose in Scotland therefore seems neither necessary nor desirable; but I do not object to the proposed consultations in the South.

I am copying this letter to the recipients of yours.

GEORGE YOUNGER

CONFIDENTIAL

Govt Machinery



Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street, SW1P 3AG

Rt Hon William Whitelaw CH MC MP
Secretary of State
Home Office
50 Queen Anne's Gate
LONDON
SW1H 9AT

R 2/10

2 October 1979

Dear Willie,

CONTINGENCY PLANNING IN THE HEALTH SERVICE

Thank you for sending me a copy of your letter of 27 September to Patrick Jenkin.

If the Civil Contingencies Unit is to fulfil its role, contingency plans must be kept up to date and reviewed as necessary. This must inevitably involve in many cases consultation with bodies outside Central Government, and I do not think the risk of leakage can outweigh the need for this. It goes without saying that every attempt should be made to avoid leakage. Nevertheless, we must be prepared for it, and it will need careful handling - stressing, I would suggest, the Government's over-riding duty to seek to maintain essential services and the consequent routine nature of the consultations, which do not in any way imply that the Government is expecting disruption in this area.

I am copying this letter to the recipients of yours.

W
John Biffen

JOHN BIFFEN

CONFIDENTIAL

Govt Machinery



PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE
WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AT

1 October 1979

The Rt Hon William Whitelaw CH MC MP
Home Secretary
The Home Office
Queen Anne's Gate
London
SW1H 9AT

R
2/10

Dear Willie,

CONTINGENCY PLANNING IN THE HEALTH SERVICE

Thank you for sending me a copy of your letter of 27 September to Patrick Jenkin on Contingency planning in the Health Service. I entirely agree with you that the necessary consultations with the Health Authorities should be carried out, and carried out quickly. Moreover, in addition to the proposals that Service personnel might be used on general duties in the NHS and in the Ambulance Service I should like to suggest that the consultations be extended to include the use of voluntary workers in industrial disputes. There are many, many people who would be only too glad to help out at such a time and we should exploit this to the full.

If our proposals do leak out - as you suspect they might - then I think we should explain what we are doing and why. After all, it is only sensible planning and part of the Government's normal process. It worked in the case of the threatened London underground strike, and I see no reason why we should not use the same tactic again.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister and members of the E Committee, the Secretary of State for Defence, the Secretaries of State for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, the Secretary of State for Social Services, and Sir John Hunt.

Yours ever,
Angus

ANGUS MAUDE

CONFIDENTIAL

Good Machinery



QUEEN ANNE'S GATE LONDON SW1H 9AT

27 September 1949

Dear Patrick

RJJS

CONTINGENCY PLANNING IN THE HEALTH SERVICE

As part of the review of our contingency planning against possible industrial action, the Civil Contingencies Unit (C.C.U.) at official level have asked for Ministerial approval and guidance on two matters concerned with the National Health Service.

First, it has been envisaged in outline plans that Service personnel might be used on general duties in the N.H.S. (stokers/mechanics; electricians; in laundries; drivers). But to have plans which can be put into action rapidly and effectively the Services need to know how many, and what kinds of staff are needed where. That requires consultation with the Health Authorities. If the consultation is left until trouble is brewing it has seemed in the past more likely to exacerbate the problems than to help - and so the plan has never been used. Your Department has therefore proposed to C.C.U. that they should consult now - at a time of peace. Even that is likely of course to be represented by the unions as provocative - if, as is almost inevitable, news of the consultations leaks out. The handling of public relations in that event would need careful thought - but it seems to me that we must grasp the nettle now, since we should otherwise have to accept that our plans for using Service personnel in these aspects of the N.H.S. will be seriously defective.

Secondly there is the question of the ambulance service. Plans exist to use Service drivers and attendants to man the N.H.S. ambulances. But the previous Government fought shy of actually taking that step. A lesser "emergency-only" service can be provided without using N.H.S. vehicles, by combining police, voluntary service, and some Service ambulances. This procedure was adopted in some areas last winter. There is no point in our maintaining a paper plan which no-one is willing to implement. So several questions arise. Are we as a Government willing in principle to use troops to drive N.H.S. ambulances in a strike-breaking role? If we are - will the Health Authorities, on whom the management decisions rest - take the same view? Or would they prefer to settle for the "emergency-only" service using non-N.H.S. vehicles? Again consultation with the Health Authorities is needed to find out.

/I shall...

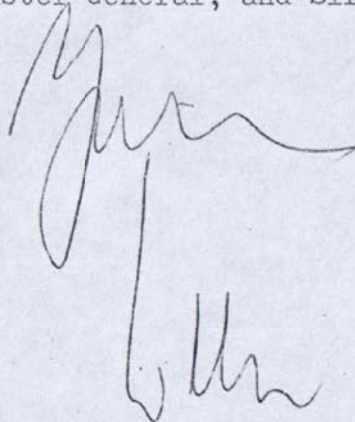
The Rt. Hon. Patrick Jenkin, M.P.

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I shall be reporting to E Committee colleagues during October on the state of contingency planning generally, but meanwhile I accept the view of C.C.U. officials that early Ministerial guidance is needed on these important N.H.S. plans.

Subject to any views which you and our colleagues may have, I would propose to authorise the necessary consultations with Health Authorities. Since it is important that consultations - if they are to occur - should be undertaken as soon as possible, I should be grateful for replies before 3rd October. I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister and members of E Committee, the Secretary of State for Defence, the Secretaries of State for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, the Paymaster General, and Sir John Hunt.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'John Hunt', is written in the center of the page. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long vertical stroke extending downwards from the main body of the name.

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Good
Machinery

PRIME MINISTER

The Home Secretary might raise
this with you over lunch today.

out.

DUTY CLERK

22 September 1979

Tim

Now. Good plans d-
power stations are
still very good
mt.

CONFIDENTIALHOME OFFICE
QUEEN ANNE'S GATE LONDON SW1A 9AT

21 September 1979

Dear Tim,

CIVIL CONTINGENCIES

Thank you for your letter of 12th September in which you asked for a note outlining the contingency plans presently on the stocks, and their state of readiness, against the possibility of industrial disruption this coming winter.

As you will be aware, the Civil Contingencies Unit (C.C.U.) is concerned only with the consequences of industrial disputes, and then only where they threaten supplies and services essential to the life of the community. It is not concerned with handling such disputes in any other sense, nor of course with settling them. It is a co-ordinating body which oversees contingency planning and ensures that it is kept up to date: and which in an actual situation ensures that agreed options are presented to ministers. It does not itself have executive powers; executive responsibility rests with the Departments concerned in every case. Even in its own limited area of essential supplies and services, its scope is necessarily limited by practical constraints. As the Home Secretary said in E Committee on 19th July, its plans cannot be comprehensive; cannot guarantee an effective or durable means of withstanding industrial disruption; and cannot at best do more than buy time.

I attach a schedule prepared by the secretariat of the C.C.U. which lists in the left hand column the 15 industries and services where it is thought that industrial action could most seriously affect supplies and services essential to the life of the community. Alongside each are described the contingency arrangements which currently exist as a means of reducing vulnerability, under four headings -

b. Military Plans

c. Emergency Powers, which may be made by an Order in Council under the Emergency Powers Act 1920 or Energy Act 1976, e.g. to waive statutory obligations or control the supply and consumption of materials.

d. Alternative Resources, when regular workers are on strike, e.g. volunteer labour or standby generators.

e. Stockpiling arrangements.

Finally, a remarks column indicates points specific to a particular industry or service. As a footnote to schedule item 7b. (military plans for civil service contingencies) I should add that the C.C.U.

/is not

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is not responsible for the M.O.D's "in-house" plans for using Service personnel in certain circumstances to replace civilians affected by industrial action; these are referred to under item 1d.

This schedule represents the current form. The C.C.U. is at present co-ordinating a review of contingency plans, which should be ready for consideration by Ministers in mid-October. This goes beyond the usual annual up-date; it is a new review, for new Ministers, who face a new situation. The Home Secretary would not wish to preempt its recommendations at this stage but has given instructions for it to be completed with the maximum speed consistent with necessary thoroughness.

*Y
Lous cov,
Pm*

J.A. CHILCOT

CONFIDENTIAL

4 September 1979

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Thames House South
Millbank SW1P 4QJ

Tel: 01-211-0925

ENERGY STATISTICS - WEEKLY STATEMENT ⁽¹⁾

			Week ending				
			26.8.78	4.8.79	11.8.79	18.8.79	25.8.79
COAL							
Production ⁽²⁾	(m tonnes)		2.30	1.19	1.74	2.05	2.19
Undistributed stocks	"		10.97	11.61	11.35	11.19	11.02
Voluntary absence ⁽³⁾	(%)		4.4	2.3	4.2	3.9	4.2
Involuntary absence ⁽³⁾	"		12.7	9.6	9.4	9.6	10.0
Output per manshift overall ⁽³⁾	(tonnes)		2.17	1.78	2.02	2.15	2.18
POWER STATIONS							
Coal: Stocks	(m tonnes)		20.01	14.11	14.24	14.31	14.50
Consumption	"		1.28	1.23	1.34	1.45	1.45
Receipts	"		1.50	1.19	1.47	1.52	1.63
Oil ⁽⁴⁾ Stocks	"		1.04	0.87	1.00	1.10	1.17
Consumption	"		0.13	0.08	0.09	0.09	0.10
Receipts	"		0.15	0.12	0.21	0.19	0.17
Electricity supplied ⁽⁵⁾	(GWh)		3,769	3,350	3,593	3,796	3,916
Temperature corrected	"		(3,791)	(3,350)	(3,598)	(3,796)	(3,793)
GAS INDUSTRY							
Oil: Stocks	(m tonnes)		0.25	0.13	0.12	0.12	0.12
Gas: Sent out ⁽⁶⁾	(m therms)		178	158	174	190	208
			Month ending				
			31.8.78	31.5.79	30.6.79	31.7.79	31.8.79
OIL COMPANIES' STOCKS - UK ⁽⁷⁾							
Stock level	(m tonnes)		19.6	17.3	18.4	18.4	19.3
Estimated endurance:	(days supply)						
Motor spirit			56	61	62	64	67
Kerosene			84	71	74	74	74
Gas/Diesel			96	102	108	97	90
Fuel oil			87	112	112	101	91
Naphtha			68	71	73	63	68
All finished products ⁽⁸⁾			82	86	90	85	82

(1) Great Britain unless otherwise stated. All latest figures subject to revision.

(2) Including opencast

(3) MCB mines only

(4) On field, before export

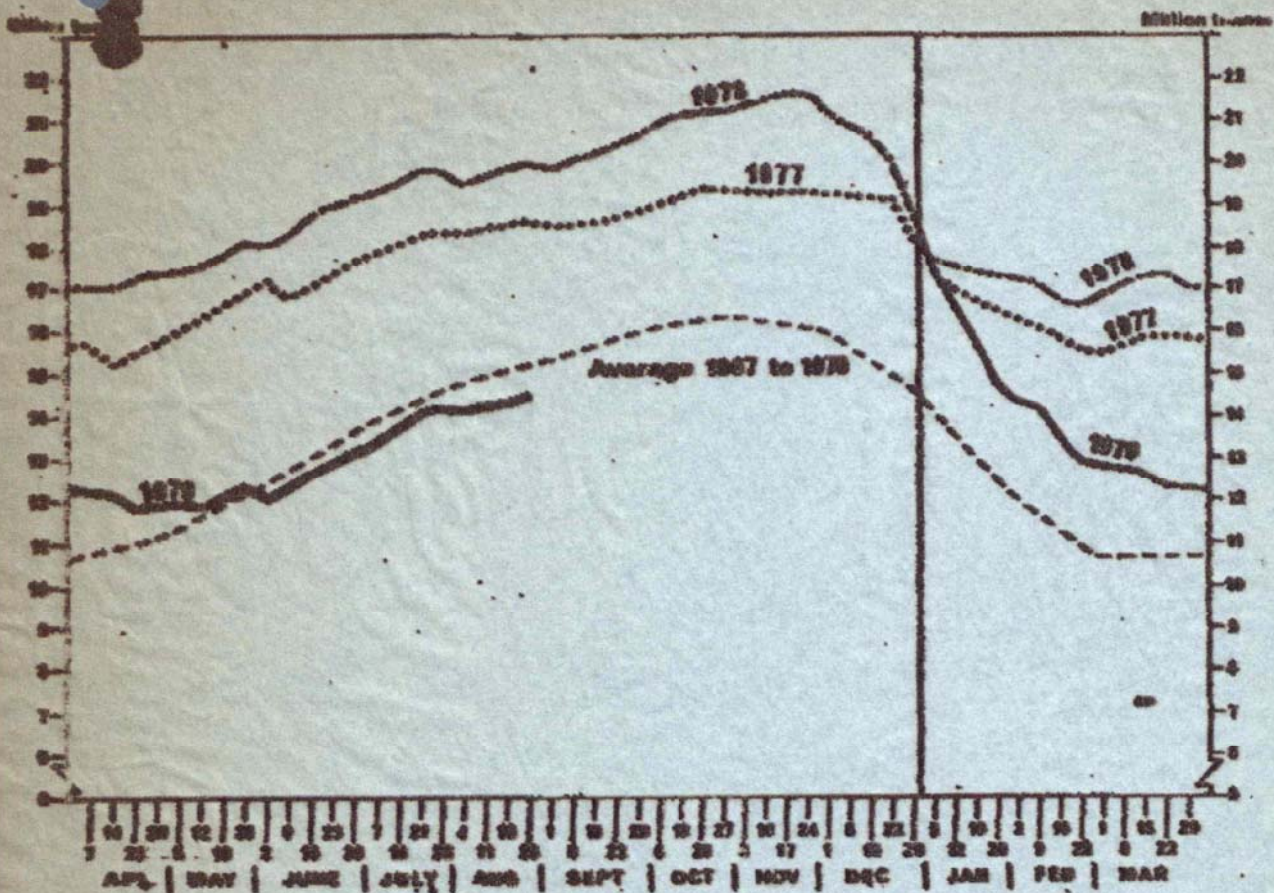
(5) Steam stations including nuclear

(6) Natural and town gas

(7) Including the product equivalent of crude and process oils

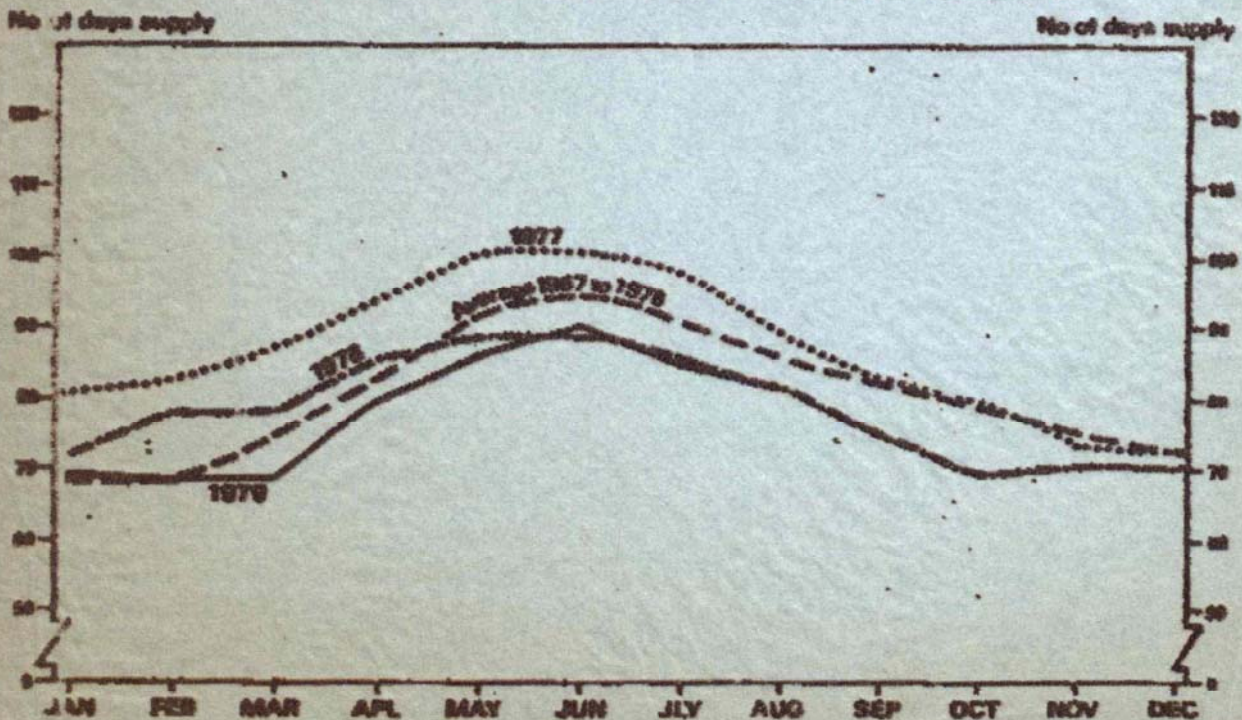
(8)

COAL STOCKS AT PUBLIC SUPPLY POWER STATIONS IN GREAT BRITAIN



OIL COMPANIES STOCKS - UK

ESTIMATED ENDURANCE: ALL FINISHED PRODUCTS (see Table, Note 7)



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Gov Machinery



Clive Hill 26/9

HOME OFFICE
QUEEN ANNE'S GATE LONDON SW1H 9AT

21 September 1979

*PM has seen a copy
of this, but I thought
you should see too.*

*(Coal stocks at power stations
are at a low level compared with
previous years).*

Dear Tim,

CIVIL CONTINGENCIES

TL 26/9

Thank you for your letter of 12th September in which you asked for a note outlining the contingency plans presently on the stocks, and their state of readiness, against the possibility of industrial disruption this coming winter.

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- e. Stockpiling arrangements.

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/is not

Tim Lankester, Esq.

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Y
Lans etc,
JAC

J.A. CHILCOT

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a. Industry and Services in which industrial action can most seriously affect the life of the Nation	CONTINGENCY ARRANGEMENTS				REMARKS f.
	b. Military Plan	c. Emergency Powers	d. Alternative Resources	e. Stockpiling	
1. CIVIL SERVICE	None, but ad hoc always possible, eg fuel to air traffic computer generators	N/A	Yes - eg contract printing; servicemen at defence establishments	Yes - forms and paperf	Little public sympathy
2. COAL MINERS	Yes - for distribution only. Practicability under review.	Yes	Impracticable	Yes, at power stations See attached	Strong support from Unions (eg NUR) not in dispute
3. ELECTRICITY WORKERS	None	Yes	Standby generators at hospitals, private generation	N/A	Some support from some other Unions
4. FIRE SERVICE	Yes	Yes - eg if requisitioning required	Very limited through industrial/military fire brigades	Yes - reserve appliances	Unlikely to attract public sympathy again so soon after 1977
5. GAS WORKERS	Yes - for safety only	Yes	Impracticable	N/A	Natural gas very non-labour intensive
6. NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE	Yes - ambulances and hospital chores	Possible but unlikely	Yes - volunteers; contractors	Yes - food; disposable linen	Strong support from Local Authority employees
7. BROADCASTING SERVICES	None	N/A	Yes - wartime broadcasting service	N/A	
8. LOCAL AUTHORITY WORKERS	Yes - sewage pumps	Yes	Yes eg Sewage into rivers; contractors; volunteers.	Yes - plastic bags	Support from NHS workers
9. OIL WORKERS	Yes - for distribution	Yes	Impracticable	Yes - but very little at petrol stations	See attached for stock levels
10. PORTS	Yes - unloading	Yes	Limited airlift	Yes	
11. POSTS AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS	Yes - but very minor	N/A	Yes - private enterprise	N/A	
12. RAILWAYS	Yes - vehicle parks only	Yes	Yes - road transport.	N/A	Much inter-rail union rivalry
13. ROAD HAULAGE	Yes - oil tankers only	Yes	Yes - rail	N/A	Many private, non-union operators
14. SEAMEN	None	N/A	Limited airlift	N/A	
15. WATER INDUSTRY	Yes	Yes	Stand pipes in the streets	Problem is distribution, not supply	

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FUE

289
Govt. Machinery

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

12 September 1979

6/F-25-9.79

The Prime Minister would be grateful for a note from the Civil Contingencies Unit outlining the contingency plans which we have on the stocks, and their state of readiness, against the possibility of industrial disruption this coming winter. It would be helpful if we could have this by 25 September.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Martin Vile (Cabinet Office).

I. P. LANKESTER

John Chilcot, Esq.,
Home Office.

CONFIDENTIAL

5 B

CONFIDENTIAL

*Original filed
Transport May '79 (Tubeline)*



*Transport Govt
Defense Machinery
8/6/79*

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

6 June 1979

Dear John.

*2
1/6*

Civil Contingencies Unit

The Prime Minister has decided to reactivate the Civil Contingencies Unit in the Cabinet Office and she would be very grateful if the Home Secretary would take on the role of Ministerial Chairman of the Unit.

The Prime Minister would like the Home Secretary in this capacity to bring together the Ministers concerned with the impending London Underground strike. She is particularly concerned about the inter-action of such a strike with a sympathetic or parallel strike on London buses and a concurrent shortage of petrol and diesel oil which would stand in the way of private transport filling the gap. She is also aware that the direct responsibility for London Transport rests with the GLC, and that if the Underground employees' claims were met without compensating savings on manning, there would have to be rises in either fares or rates or both. It would be appropriate, therefore, for Mr. Whitelaw to convene a Contingency Unit meeting with the Minister of Transport, the Secretaries of State for Energy, Environment and Employment present, to assess the situation and its possible development and consider how the Government should deal with it both operationally and in terms of presentation of the case to the general public. In this connection, she would like the Paymaster General also to be involved.

The Prime Minister would be glad to have a report from the Home Secretary by the evening of Friday 8 June.

I am copying this minute to the Private Secretaries to the Minister of Transport, the Secretaries of State for Energy, Environment and Employment, the Paymaster General and to Sir John Hunt.

You will already have received a copy of Tim Lankester's letter to Mrs. Flanagan (Ministry of Transport) of 4 June asking for a report by the end of this week. The arrangements set out in this letter supersede those in the earlier letter.

*Yours ever,
Ken Stone*

John Chilcot, Esq.,
Home Office.

CONFIDENTIAL

me

9/8/79

Best work
KRS 1/11

Prime Minister.

1.

Ref: A09643

Deal with
in letter to
Civ. to HO
P.A.

PRIME MINISTER

KRS
12/11

The CU is a piece of machinery with which No 10 has to keep in closest touch: all disasters end up on the P.M.'s table! In my experience it is invaluable - providing it is not asked to do the impossible.

KRS
30/11

Civil Contingencies Unit

This minute seeks your instructions about the future of the Civil Contingencies Unit (CU). The CU was established in 1972 to co-ordinate the preparation of plans for ensuring in emergency the supplies and services essential to the life of the community and, in specific emergencies, to supervise the implementation of the plans. It was very active in the winter of 1973-74 (under Mr. Prior's chairmanship) in the winter of 1977-78 (particularly over the firemen's strike) and throughout the whole of last winter. Its remit covers natural disasters as well as the consequences of industrial disputes.

2. As hitherto constituted, the Chairman of CU has always been a senior Minister, but his Deputy Chairman has been the Deputy Secretary on the Defence side of the Cabinet Office (Sir Clive Rose) and the members are representatives of the main functional Departments concerned with the provision of essential supplies and services, including the Ministry of Defence. Much of the work consists of detailed discussion of contingency plans and in particular sorting out the priorities to be accorded to the requirements of different Departments. Although much of this can be done by officials, it is important that the work should have political oversight. This arrangement (i.e. a group of officials chaired by a senior Minister) also has the advantage that in the event of an emergency, there is one Minister who is in a position to speak authoritatively in Cabinet or the appropriate Cabinet Committee about contingency arrangements. Although, as I say, the other members of CU are normally officials it has always been accepted that other Ministers may attend when the Chairman considers this desirable.

3. There is no specific emergency in prospect for which we foresee a need to activate contingency plans, although natural disasters can occur at any time without warning. We cannot however afford to be complacent about what may happen in the next pay round and in any case at this time of year a general review is undertaken of our plans, so that any changes which need to



be made can be brought into effect by the autumn. This is especially important this year so that we can take account of the practical experience gained last winter in implementing plans and operating the regional organisation

4. I hope you will agree to maintain the CU on the present basis: and if you have any doubts I should welcome the chance of discussing the matter with you. Assuming you agree, I recommend that the Home Secretary should be asked to take on the chairmanship. He is the Minister responsible if action is needed to introduce Emergency Powers and I understand that Mr. Whitelaw is indeed expecting that he will be given this role.

(John Hunt)

*Will discuss
and*

29th May 1979