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Confidential Filing

Contingency Arrangements for dealing with terrorist incidents

~~DETAILS~~ SECURITY

June 1979

Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date
4.7.79							
1.11.79							
3.12.79							
4.12.79							
14.12.79							
13-3-81							
20-3-81							
4.5.81							
14.5.81							
1.3.85							
21.11.85							

PREM 19/1628

TO BE RETAINED AS TOP ENCLOSURE

Cabinet / Cabinet Committee Documents

Reference	Date
JIC(79) 11	13/07/1979
OD(T)(79) 3	11/10/1979
OD(81) 19	13/03/1981

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 *J. Young*

Date *25/6/2014*

PREM Records Team

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Prime Minister²

Mr Fisher
to know of this
New ✓

HOME OFFICE
QUEEN ANNE'S GATE
LONDON SW1H 9AT

21 November 1985

Dear Nigel,

mt

The Home Secretary thought that the Prime Minister would want to be aware that the annual counter-terrorist exercise to test the Government and police response to a terrorist incident within Great Britain is to take place next week, between 25 and 28 November.

On this occasion the incident will be a simulated take-over of an oil installation in the North Sea. The police response will be centred on the Humber-side Police headquarters, and the Cabinet Office Briefing Room will be open for the duration of the exercise. The Home Secretary and Ministers of other Departments involved - the Foreign Office, the Ministry of Defence and the Department of Energy - will be taking part at intervals during the proceedings, and as part of the exercise the Royal Marines, with support from all three armed services, will be involved in support of the civil power. This is the first occasion on which the offshore scenario has been exercised on this scale, with the full involvement of the Cabinet Office Office, Government Departments, the intelligence agencies, the police, the armed forces, and BP, and the complex communications which link them.

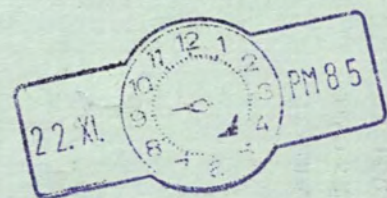
It is not intended that the exercise should attract any publicity. A press line has been prepared if unusual activity at the police headquarters is noticed locally: but we would not expect the activity offshore, or the fact that COBR is opened, to be noticed.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the Private Secretaries to the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, the Secretary of State for Defence, the Secretary of State for Energy, and Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours,
S W Smith

S W BOYS SMITH

Nigel Wicks, Esq.



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JG

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

1 March 1983

ANGLO/NORWEGIAN CO-OPERATION ON COUNTER-TERRORIST
ACTIVITIES IN THE NORTH SEA

The Prime Minister has noted the contents of your letter of 23 February.

I am copying this letter to Richard Mottram (Ministry of Defence) and Tony Rawsthorne (Home Office).

A. J. COLES

Roger Bone, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

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RETAINED UNDER SECTION 3 (4)
OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT

23 February 1983

Prime Minister

To note.

A.S.C. 24/2.

New York,

M

Anglo/Norwegian Co-operation on Counter-Terrorist Activities in
the North Sea

The Prime Minister may wish to be aware of the stage we have reached in discussions with the Norwegians regarding the security of oil and gas installations in the North Sea.

Official talks began at the end of 1978 with the objective of establishing a joint contingency plan and developing bilateral co-operation in order to counter terrorist threats to the installations. The Norwegian Government have been particularly anxious to improve co-operation and Mrs Rokke, the Norwegian Minister of Justice, welcomed the progress so far achieved in discussions with the Home Secretary in September 1982.

Substantial progress has now been made. Close links have been established between Stavanger and Grampian police forces

A major 'table top' exercise to test the plan will be held in Stavanger in March.

In parallel, officials have also been studying legal and political aspects of co-operation, particularly co-operation involving the use of the armed forces or police of one country within the jurisdiction of the other. Much common ground has now been established on the two major issues of primacy of jurisdiction and indemnity of civil claims arising from injury and damage.

The proposals on indemnity do not require legislative backing, but both sides would require general legislation to cover the question of jurisdiction. We have been told that the Norwegians intend to do this in a clause in their Petroleum Bill which will be introduced into the Storting in

/March.



March. This will cover the case of British forces operating on installations in Norwegian waters. We will need to offer a reciprocal agreement. This could be achieved by a clause expanding the 1952 Visiting Forces Act when a suitable legislative opportunity arises. The Home Office will monitor the legislative programme to watch for a suitable opportunity to introduce this amendment. However, it is unlikely that this will occur for two to three years.

In the meantime, we need to reach an understanding with the Norwegians. Officials here, in consultation with the MOD and the Home Office, have, therefore, drawn up the attached confidential Memorandum of Understanding which they would propose to discuss with the Norwegian side at a meeting in Oslo in early March.

I am copying this letter to Richard Mottram (MOD) and Tony Rawsthorne (Home Office).

Yours ever
Robert Bone

(R B Bone)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street

22 FEB 1983

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ANNEX A.

1. With regard to the current terrorist incident at and the understanding of HMG and the Government of the Kingdom of Norway that the armed forces of each country may, with the consent of the other, be used to bring that incident to a resolution, it is further understood that.

A) Each government waives all its claims against the other for damage to its property or for any injury or death suffered by any of its personnel arising out of operations mounted by the armed forces of (the UK) (Norway) (Both Governments) to bring the terrorist incident at to a resolution.

B) The Government of (UK/Norway/Both) will fully indemnify the Government of (UK/Norway/Both) and its personnel against any liability in respect of any act or omission or incident arising out of the operations referred to in paragraph A above and for which the latter are legally responsible to any third party who has suffered loss or damage thereof.

OR

B) Expenses and costs in respect of third party claims arising in relation to the operations referred to in paragraph A above in respect of which either Government or their respective personnel are legally responsible will be shared equally between the Governments who will co-operate and consult with each other for the purpose of dealing with any such claim received.

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Security

MR. WRIGHT

P

Counter Terrorist Exercise

The Prime Minister has seen your minute to me of 11 May about exercise GASLIGHT. She has decided not to visit the exercise.

MICHAEL ALEXANDER

14 May 1981

7 (1)

Prime Minister
See Mrs Stephens' minute below. Leave
it this time? Yes
no And

Ref. A04859

MR ALEXANDER

Counter Terrorist Exercise

A major counter-terrorism exercise, code-named GASLIGHT, will be held from 18 to 20 May. This exercise will be the second in the series, which started with exercise MARTOCK in July 1979 (which the Prime Minister visited), designed to test the Government's capability for military intervention overseas in a terrorist incident (Operation PULPIT).

2. The Cabinet Office Briefing Room will be fully manned for this exercise throughout 18 and 19 May, and from morning until late evening on 20 May. Subject to the timetable for the Nationality Bill, Mr Luce will participate in the role of exercise Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary for part of the time, with officials taking over when necessary. Defence Ministers are also likely to participate.

3. Perhaps you would let me know whether the Prime Minister would like to visit exercise GASLIGHT.

D J Wright

D J WRIGHT

11th May, 1981

Mr Alexander

Not at all easy:-

18- Brighton
19th cd do it late not
right but Women Conference
next day also time
for speech. Cf. 12/5.

P.J.

very early Tuesday
19th ie 0730 or 0800?
but very bad week.

Ref: A04505



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*PA is internal,
Ks
Shut*

MR. ALEXANDER

Convention Against the Taking of Hostages Bill

In his memorandum (OD(81) 19) the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary invites his colleagues, by their silence, to agree that the Government should enact by the end of 1981 a Bill to ratify the United Nations Hostages Convention.

2. The grounds he adduces for undertaking this legislation and for going so soon are uncontroversial and compelling. QL has agreed (QL(81) 2nd Meeting) that this Bill should be included in the 1981-82 Programme and that it should be taken early, provided that the Opposition agree (as they very likely will) to having the Second Reading in Committee. The drafting of the Bill is well under way and there is no reason why it should not be ready for introduction at the start of the new Session.

3. There is no need therefore for the Prime Minister to comment on Lord Carrington's proposal.

(D.J. Wright)

20th March 1981

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Ref: A0967



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Prime Minister

MR. ALEXANDER

(on return from W'bin, with
ref.)

Counter Terrorist Contingency Arrangements

Your minute of 4th December conveyed a number of questions put by the Prime Minister on OD(T)(79) 3 of 11th October.

I attach a note prepared by the Home Office in consultation with the Security Service, the Department of Energy and the Ministry of Defence on the issues raised by the Prime Minister.

air.

mv.

(M. J. Vile)

14th December 1979

to
Rmt

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COUNTER TERRORIST CONTINGENCY ARRANGEMENTS

Terrorist threat to nuclear materials

1. A successful terrorist attack on a nuclear installation or a nuclear convoy would require a well trained and armed group which had detailed knowledge of the location of the material and of the measures in force to protect it, and which was equipped to overcome the physical barriers it would encounter. Similarly a surreptitious attack would require a detailed knowledge of both the location and the protection measures.
2. There is no evidence to suggest that any known terrorist group is contemplating attacks on protected nuclear targets in the UK or that they or any of the Arab governments, with the support of some of the international groups, are likely to do so.
3. The indigenous anti-nuclear movement in the UK has, to date, shown a reluctance to use violent action in pursuit of its aim to achieve a ban on the development of nuclear power, although some foreign groups have advocated direct action tactics.
4. It was in view of these factors that the threat to nuclear materials and installations was assessed as low, when compared to targets such as British Airways at London Airport. The threat is kept permanently under review by the Security Service.

Access by UKAEA Constabulary to automatic weapons

5. These are held in armouries at each of the four sites rather than carried by constables. The weapons are, however, held ready for immediate issue, together with charged magazines. The Station Officer on duty at a site is authorised to issue weapons; and it would take from five to twenty minutes, depending on circumstances, to bring the weapons to bear at the point where they are needed. A faster response would require automatic weapons to be carried as a matter of course.

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Threat to AWRE

6. The Security Service assessment is that there is no reason to believe that the threat to AWRE is higher than that to other nuclear establishments.

7. The AWRE site is protected by an armed MOD police force and protective measures are, in general, similar to those at sites owned by the UKAEA and BNFL. The arrangements are nevertheless continually under review, and a study has recently been completed which takes into account the potential long term terrorist threat. A number of measures have been recommended and are being implemented. It is the intention to make a report to OD(T) next year on security at AWRE.

8. Improvements have also been made to the security of military nuclear materials in transit.

Supplies of gas masks and protective clothing

9. Stocks of adequate protective masks and clothing are available for use by specialist teams from the MOD and from civil nuclear establishments which might be called to the scene of an incident involving toxic gases and substances. The Fire Service also have adequate supplies of breathing apparatus and protective clothing to provide protection against most toxic gases and substances.

10. The Police Service does not possess protective equipment to the same standard. The degree of expertise required in the use of such equipment would make it impracticable for all police officers to be so equipped; and their role in dealing with such hazards should not make this necessary. However, the study referred to in paragraph 18 of OD(T)(79)3 will include a review of the need for protective equipment and a further report will be made to Ministers in due course.

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Security



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

MR. VILE

Exercise 'Smoked Salmon'

Thank you for your minute A0836 of
3 December 1979.

The Prime Minister was glad to have this
information about Exercise 'Smoked Salmon'. She
does not propose to take part in the exercise.

C. A. WHITMORE

4 December 1979

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

MR VILE

Counter Terrorist Contingency Arrangements

The Prime Minister has seen a copy of the OD(T) paper of 11 October on this subject. She has asked a number of questions:-

- (a) why the terrorist threat to civil nuclear materials is assessed, in paragraph 16, to be low. Terrorism is now a professional activity. Terrorists would no doubt agree with the paper that "the consequences of a successful terrorist action [against civil nuclear materials] could be very serious";
- (b) how rapidly UKAEA constables guarding civil nuclear sites would have access to automatic weapons;
- (c) whether we are not being too complacent about the terrorist threat to the Atomic Weapons Research Establishment;
- (d) whether we have an adequate supply of gas masks and protective clothing which would be effective against most toxic gases. The Prime Minister recognises that there is no remedy against some toxic gases and substances.

MA

4 December 1979

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DBJ

Security 5
B/F 11-12-79

Ref: A0836



CONFIDENTIAL

MR. WHITMORE

Exercise 'Smoked Salmon'

You will be familiar with the 'Smoked Salmon' series of command and control exercises designed to test counter-terrorist contingency arrangements for use in any incident involving off-shore oil or gas installations. The latest in this series is being held this week from about 2.00 pm 3rd December to 2.00 pm 5th December. The Home Secretary, Lord Belstead and Sir Brian Cubbon will each take the chair in COBR at different times and other Ministers plan to call in to observe the exercise in progress. Most activity in COBR will be concentrated within normal working hours.

2. The Prime Minister attended Exercise Martock in July and showed great interest in it. The present exercise does not involve any movement of troops and is more modest in scope. I doubt if the Prime Minister would want to attend again but you will wish to be aware of the exercise in case it is mentioned to the Prime Minister by the Home Secretary or in case some mention of the exercise should somehow get into the Press.

Prime Minister ^{2.}

For information only. You do not really have time to attend this exercise, even if you wished to do so.

JMH

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amb

MJV

(M. J. Vile)

3rd December 1979

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Y SWYDDFA GYMREIG

GWYDYR HOUSE

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Tel. 01-233 3000 (Switsfwrdd)
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Oddi wrth Ysgrifennydd Gwladol Cymru



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From The Secretary of State for Wales

UK SECRET

fs. Smith

1 November 1979

My Secretary of State was grateful to see the memoranda OD(T)(79)3 and 4 which were sent to him in conjunction with the Paper J10(79)11. Your letter of 23 October recorded the despatch of these papers.

My Secretary of State has asked me to mention his interest in the contingency plans for dealing with major terrorist incidents in Great Britain. If such an incident took place in Wales, we assume the Secretary of State would be involved as necessary in the arrangements described in paragraphs 4 and 13 of memorandum OD(T)(79)5. Our interests do not of course parallel exactly those of the Scottish Office in that my Secretary of State does not have "home department" functions as regards the Principality. But there might be incidents which touch upon my Secretary of State's responsibilities, and he would be grateful if his interest in such cases could be kept in mind.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the Private Secretaries of the members of OD(T) Committee.

M J Vile Esq
Private Secretary
Cabinet Office
Whitehall
LONDON
SW1A 2AS

G C G CRAIG
Private Secretary

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FILE

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

4 July 1979

Counter-Terrorist Measures

The Prime Minister has seen Sir John Hunt's minute (A09739) about the contingency arrangements for dealing with terrorist incidents.

The Prime Minister has taken note of the arrangements for the first exercise designed to test procedures for military intervention overseas and has indicated that she will wish to visit the Cabinet Office Briefing Room while this exercise is in progress.

The Prime Minister agrees that a sub-committee of OD should be established to direct the planning and preparation of contingency arrangements for countering terrorism. The Prime Minister also agrees that the Home Secretary, the Defence Secretary and the Secretaries of State for Scotland, Trade and Energy, together with the Attorney General and the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary should serve on this sub-committee; but she wishes to take the chair herself.

The Prime Minister is content with the arrangements envisaged in paragraph 8 of Sir John Hunt's minute.

B. G. CARTLEDGE

M. J. Vile, Esq.,
Cabinet Office.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'M. J. Vile'.

SECRET

H.R.
PRIME MINISTER

Counter-Terrorist Measures

You commented on Sir John Hunt's minute below that you would like to take part yourself in the exercise which will soon be taking place to test our new procedures for possible military intervention overseas. The exercise itself will be taking place in Cyprus, controlled from the Cabinet Office Briefing Room. Since this first exercise is largely experimental, Sir John does not consider that any direct Ministerial participation would be appropriate.

I suggest that, on this occasion at any rate, you might simply visit the Cabinet Office Briefing Room while the exercise is in progress in order to familiarise yourself with what is involved. Do you agree?

BHM,

Yes out.

2 July 1979



SECRET

Ref. A09739

PRIME MINISTER

modified - see comments p11

*Prime Minister
Agree to the proposals
in paras. 7 and 8?
GWH
2/7/66*

Counter-Terrorist Measures

The purpose of this minute is to seek your approval for the contingency arrangements for dealing with terrorist incidents.

2. A terrorist act in Great Britain is a crime and responsibility for dealing with it normally rests initially with the Chief Officer of Police for the area concerned. Many terrorist incidents do not require direct Government involvement. But in certain cases such involvement would be unavoidable, e.g. where demands are made on Government by terrorists; where other Governments or foreign nationals are involved; where the use of the armed forces is necessary to restore the position; where an incident involving British interests takes place abroad; or where the scale and nature of the threat requires a political or centrally co-ordinated response. Procedures have been developed for handling such cases. The emphasis in all of them is on speed of reaction and flexibility.

3. The control of a terrorist incident in which the Government is involved would be based on the Cabinet Office Briefing Room (COBR) with the exception of terrorist incidents in Northern Ireland which are dealt with separately by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland - operating from the Northern Ireland Operations Room.

4. Depending on the nature of the incident, a variety of Government Departments may be involved, e.g. Department of Energy (offshore oil installations or theft of nuclear materials), Department of Trade (hijacking), the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (international implications or possible intervention overseas). The Home Office are always involved in the case of an incident in Great Britain and the Ministry of Defence where the possibility of the use of the Services is under consideration (as is usually likely).

5. Regular exercises have enabled us to improve the arrangements for rapid and adequate communications; for maintaining close liaison (by sending a team to the scene of the incident) with the Chief Constable or other police officer in operational charge; and for intelligence and technical support. So far the COBR

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has only been activated twice for a real life incident: in January 1975 for the hijacking of a British Airways BAC 1-11 at Heathrow; and in September 1976 for the hijacking of a TWA flight by Croatian nationalists.

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6. Since the successful German intervention at Mogadishu in 1977 our plans have been extended to cover the possibility of military intervention overseas. Such intervention would raise particular problems which do not arise in the United Kingdom and would require a major policy decision. These new procedures have not yet been tested in a full scale exercise but one is planned for the beginning of July. In this first exercise it is intended that the role of Ministers should be simulated by officials. It will include the deployment of a Government team and a simulated military assault on terrorists holding hostages.

Should refer to idea re: ref. my copy leave and copy to date 2nd 1977

7. There are two levels at which Ministerial oversight is needed. The first ^① is over the preparation of the contingency arrangements for countering terrorism. This includes not only the procedures for handling different types of incident but also a variety of measures designed to counter the terrorist threat. A number of Departments are concerned in these preparations, which go beyond the normal activities of the police. Although most of the detailed work is done by officials, under the chairmanship of the Permanent Under Secretary in the Home Office (primarily because of Home Office responsibility for the police and the Security Service), it is right that Ministers should know about and approve the plans. Accordingly I recommend the establishment of a sub-committee of the Defence and Overseas Policy Committee (OD) for this purpose. There should not be a need for many meetings and most of the Ministerial business can be handled out of Committee in correspondence. I think that ~~the Home Secretary~~ should be Chairman of the Sub-Committee and that

It is the M.T.



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Home
the other members should be the Secretaries of State for Defence, Scotland, Trade and Energy, together with the Attorney General and ~~either the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary or the Lord Privy Seal.~~

8. The second level of Ministerial participation is over the control in the COBR of an actual incident. To some extent, the nature of the incident will determine which Minister you decide should take charge. For instance, it might be appropriate for the Secretary of State for Trade to co-ordinate action over an aircraft hijacking incident. And it would probably be right for the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary to take charge in the case of intervention overseas. In certain cases you might wish to take charge personally. But since most incidents one can envisage occurring in Great Britain are likely to start with action by the police and, in many cases, may be handled on the ground throughout by the Chief Constable, it may be sensible for the Home Secretary to be given general responsibility for oversight of terrorist arrangements in the COBR. This would provide an essential focal point for those officials who are responsible for recommending the activation of the COBR and would ensure that a senior Minister was briefed to take charge immediately if required.

9. I should be glad to know whether you agree with the arrangements proposed in paragraphs 7 and 8 above.

Mr.
pp

(John Hunt)

8th June, 1979

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