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MINISTRY OF DEFENCE  
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MO 25/3/4

10th January 1980

Dear Clive,

PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE  
4TH JANUARY 1980

Annexes filed  
separately.

A filed on  
Defence (July 79)  
'Exercise  
Crusade 80  
etc'

B filed on  
Ireland (Pt 5)  
situation ✓

C filed on  
Defence (Jan  
80) Para  
Capability ✓

My Secretary of State thought that it might be helpful to the Prime Minister if I were to let you have some notes on points which arose during her visit here last Friday and on which time did not permit full discussion.

I attach three notes accordingly, dealing with the NATO Exercise Programme (Annex A), Northern Ireland Border Bases (Annex B) and the UK's Parachute Capability (Annex C). I hope that these notes will be self-explanatory but I should perhaps add some very brief covering comments. As regards the Exercise Programme (see paragraph 3) we stand ready to re-examine the question of the extent of Ministerial participation in exercises; it may be that the Cabinet Office would like to take the lead on this. As regards Northern Ireland Border Bases, my Secretary of State proposes to discuss with the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland the conclusions of the GOC Northern Ireland when he has completed the study to which reference is made in the fourth paragraph of Annex B. As regards Annex C I would draw attention particularly to the studies which it is explained in its paragraph 4 are in hand.

The question of the RUC's requirement for weapons was also raised during the Prime Minister's visit. On this, I understand that the Northern Ireland Office are undertaking a full study of alternative sources of supply and that this

/ study ...

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2.

study will be reported to the Prime Minister. The Army's standard handgun is the Browning 9mm semi-automatic pistol, which would not meet the RUC requirement for a revolver. Revolvers are not issued to HM forces except for a very limited number for specialist uses.

Perhaps you would let me know whether there is any further advice we can offer, either in respect of the matters to which I have referred above, or on others which were discussed during the Prime Minister's visit.

X | My Secretary of State explained to the Prime Minister, as you know, that he would very much welcome it if the Prime Minister could find the time to pay a further visit here; he considers that we could arrange one with an equally wide range of interest given the wide scope of defence business; and we would ourselves find another visit extremely valuable.

I am sending copies of this letter to George Walden (FCO), Roy Harrington (NIO) and Martin Vile (Cabinet Office).

*Yours most,  
Brian*

(B M NORBURY)

Prime Minister.

✓ The Cabinet Office are going to put in advice on Ministerial participation in NATO crisis management exercises.

I think that it would be a good idea to ask for the conclusions of the study on Northern Ireland border bases to be reported to you in view of the interest you have taken in the problem. Agree? **Yes MT.**

The study on the parachute assault capability will now be submitted in the more general work on our defence capabilities which is being done for OD and on which Sir Robert Armstrong reported on the week-end.

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As regards X/ above, I imagine that you will not wish to go back to Defence before you have completed your first round of visits to Government departments. Agree? **Yes MT**  
B.M.N. 15.1.80