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MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
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MO 9

22nd June 1981

Dear Clive,

Thank you for your letter of 8th June covering one the Prime Minister has received from the Leader of the Liberal Party.

My Secretary of State has considered what arrangements might best be made. He agrees that the offer for a briefing should be extended to the Leader of the Opposition as well as Mr Steel but, so that some of the more interesting (but very highly classified) material can be included he suggests that it should be given on a "Privy Councillor" basis which would mean that the Shadow Defence Spokesman, Mr Brynmor John, would have to be excluded. My Secretary of State has considered whether the Social Democratic Party should be involved (and invitations thus extended to Dr Owen and Mr Rodgers) but thinks that this would be wrong.

You have already decided that this is not to be done.

On content my Secretary of State believes that the briefing should cover the threat from the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact worldwide and should concentrate on developments in recent years. It should be extensively illustrated (and would last between 30 and 40 minutes): the Prime Minister will recall that the previous briefing (to which Mr Steel refers) was given by a NATO team and he considers that the briefing should again be a NATO one if a good one can be arranged. CDS, or all the Chiefs of Staff, should attend.

On timing the various considerations may point to arranging the briefing after the Summer Recess but my Secretary of State would not rule out the offer of a date in July if the Prime Minister so desired.

The briefing could be held either at No 10 or in the Ministry of Defence.

C A Whitmore Esq

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If you could let me know the Prime Minister's wishes, my Secretary of State could set in hand arrangements accordingly. If you would like draft letters to Mr Foot and Mr Steel you will no doubt let me know.

Yours ever
Boris

(B M NORBURY)

Prime Minister.

Appeal that :-

Yes

a. the briefing should be on Foreign Council's terms (where possible Mr Chapman Jones).

b. it should be given by - NATO team, not a national one?

Do you wish the briefing :-

c. to be in July or the autumn.

d. to be given in No 10 or in the MoD?

July if possible

no?

AKW
Boris