

CONFIDENTIAL

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PRIME MINISTER

Prime Minister

The Home Secretary has persuaded colleagues to fund the Priority I items in the Civil Defence proposals.

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CIVIL DEFENCE

MFD  
22/7/70

We agreed at Cabinet on 10th July that the aim should be to finance the enhanced civil defence programme within existing budgets and colleagues were asked to let me know whether they could find the money for their particular measures. The Secretary of State for Scotland is still in some difficulty over this, but I believe that it should be possible to resolve the matter, subject to the Chief Secretary taking account of this factor in his bilateral discussion with the Secretary of State for Scotland. I am glad to say that all our other colleagues are prepared to make available from planned allocations the funds necessary for the Priority 1 measures.

I shall be circulating within the next few days a draft of the Parliamentary statement which I propose to make before the Recess.

I am sending copies of this minute to other members of the Cabinet, the Minister of Transport and Sir Robert Armstrong.

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23 July 1970

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23 JUL 1980



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Defence

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

23 July 1980

The Prime Minister was pleased to note that the Home Secretary has been able to obtain the agreement of colleagues to the funding of Civil Defence Priority 1 items, as recorded in his minute of 23 July. She hopes that the remaining difficulty over the Secretary of State for Scotland's contribution can be resolved.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Godfrey Robson (Scottish Office), Alistair Pirie (Chief Secretary's Office) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

M. A. PATTISON

John Halliday, Esq.,  
Home Office.

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Defence

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

22 July 1980

Dear Willie,

CIVIL HOME DEFENCE

OD (80) 14 & Mig item 2

Following our discussion at OD Committee on 8 July and in Cabinet on 10 July I understand that you would like an urgent indication of how far my programme can absorb the Priority I and Priority II recommendations set out in the Annex to your Memorandum OD(80)5.

OD (80) 50

Given the priority accorded by the Government to this subject I am prepared to find £0.5 million with existing planned spending levels to meet the Priority I recommendation for additional NHS and DHSS staff. However, maintenance of health spending is also a priority area and I could not justify diverting more resources from immediate patient care. To meet the Priority II recommendation of building up emergency medical supplies, cost 1981-82 £1 million, 1982-83 £2 million, 1983-84 £2 million would therefore require specific additions to my programme.

I am copying this letter to Cabinet colleagues.

Your  
Patrol

SECRET

In PM's folder  
8/7



From the Minister

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

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8 July 1980

PRIME MINISTER

Dear Prime Minister

REVIEW OF CIVIL HOME DEFENCE POLICY

I feel I should record my views on the memorandum by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, OD(80)50, which is to be taken by the Defence and Overseas Policy Committee later today.

I support the main recommendation of the memorandum which endorses the Sub-Committee's conclusions that the cost options set out in Annex E should be incorporated by Departments in their forward-planning. For my Department, the main items are the addition of some 35,000 tonnes to the sugar stockpile to bring it up to the recommended level and the printing of food control documents, the need for which will arise when the review of food control measures currently in hand is completed and detailed plans worked out. Both items are important features in our preparations against the possibility of attack: the review of food control measures, in particular, is a direct result of the current interpretation of the threat we face in terms of the possibility of having to deal with a period of conventional attack which could start at short notice, during which we should have to take rapid steps to control food supplies.

I agree entirely with the point made in the memorandum that the division into two priorities is somewhat artificial and I would prefer to see only one category. If the decision is to retain two categories and to proceed only with those measures in Priority 1, however, I strongly urge that the printing of food control documents (£0.4m a year for five years) should be included in that category.

Although Annex E spreads the expenditure equally over five years the timing, both for the food control documents and the purchase

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of sugar, is more flexible and there could be savings if there were some discretion in the placing of contracts. This is something that can, perhaps, be considered when our plans are somewhat firmer.

My most serious reservation arises from the suggestion that any expenditure should be met within Departmental programmes. The proposal on the food stockpile does not concern a new activity but simply represents a return to the earlier situation. Expenditure on the management of the food stockpile is virtually the only part of programme 9 (defence) expenditure that falls within my responsibilities. I do not know what opportunities there may be for covering the proposed costs from elsewhere in programme 9, but I am unfortunately unable to find any offsetting savings from my Department's other programmes. If necessary, I think that the expenditure should be treated as a bid on the contingency reserve. I note that it is proposed in paragraph 7 that if the matter cannot be resolved it should be referred to Cabinet for examination in the context of the public expenditure review.

I am copying this letter to the members of OD Committee and Sir Robert Armstrong.

*D. E. Jones*

for PETER WALKER

(Approved by the Minister  
and signed in his absence)

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Ref A02550

PRIME MINISTERCIVIL HOME DEFENCE POLICY

OD(80) 50

## BACKGROUND

When OD considered "Civil Preparedness for Home Defence" at their meeting on 15 May, it was agreed that urgent work was required to assess the requirements and the arrangements needed to meet them. The Home Secretary was invited to chair a Ministerial Sub-Committee. This is their report.

2. The Home Secretary feels himself under a strong obligation to make a Parliamentary statement before the recess to announce decisions, in the face of a certain amount of unease both among the Government supporters in the House and in the country. The report attached to the Home Secretary's paper is almost entirely agreed between Departments except for the important question of how the proposed additional measures should be financed. The Chancellor of the Exchequer is likely to argue that this point must be settled before OD can seriously address itself to the desirability of what the Home Secretary is proposing. The Home Secretary on the other hand is likely to argue that the measures that he is proposing are a political imperative, and that OD should therefore first decide that they represent the right course of action to be adopted in the face of the threat and the attendant circumstances, and only thereafter consider the question of finance.



3. The alternatives seem to be -

1. for each Department to make room for its share of the expenditure within its existing programme, by making savings elsewhere;

2. to raise the Defence Budget;

3. to draw on the Contingency Reserve.

Some of the measures will fall on the budgets of civil Departments which have little interest in civil home defence, and it is the Home Secretary's obvious fear that if the financial issue is taken first, his proposals will run the risk of facing the opposition of many of his Cabinet colleagues. The defence budget could be an alternative source of money, particularly in view of its overall size, the relatively small cost of the options being proposed by the Home Secretary, and the fact that many expensive military home defence measures will be negated if more is not done for the protection of the civil population. But you will have discussed the problems of the defence programme under the previous item on the agenda and formed a view about the kind of financial pressure which it is already suffering. If this is to be a candidate for the contingency reserve, it should be looked at alongside other candidates, and this should be done in Cabinet.

4. It is proposed subject to your agreement, to invite the Secretaries of State for Industry, the Environment, Scotland, Wales and the Social Services, the Minister of Transport and the Chief Whip, as well as the Chiefs of Staff, to be present for this item to deal with the subject's many facets.

#### HANDLING

5. You will wish to invite the Home Secretary to introduce his paper. He is likely to suggest that OD should deal with the five sections identified in his opening paragraph. The discussion might therefore cover the following points -





a. The Threat

i. Does the Defence Secretary agree that this is a fair assessment of the Soviet threat to the United Kingdom? If the Soviet Air Force made available 180 aircraft for conventional operations against the United Kingdom base, would they not concentrate on British and American nuclear forces in this country and reinforcements going to the Continent? Would they not suffer heavy losses from the United Kingdom air defences? In these circumstances, how genuine is the risk to the civil population from conventional attack?

ii. What is the probability of a Soviet attack using chemical weapons? Is it possible to provide realistic civil home defence against this threat?

iii. If the nuclear threat was judged to be so serious in the 1960s that it was not worth trying to defend the civil population against it, is it worth doing so now when it has presumably got even more serious?

b. Voluntary Efforts. The Home Secretary and other members of his Ministerial Sub-Committee regard this as the key issue.

i. What would the appointment of civil defence co-ordinators at the national level involve in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland?

ii. What is the likely response by local authorities to exhortations to do more local civil defence planning in conjunction with local voluntary organisations?

iii. Is the current Territorial Army review likely to lead to the conclusion that more resources from this source can be made available to help local authorities?

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wednesday 16/24.

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C.I.P. 20/24



- ✓ iv. Are the Womens Royal Voluntary Services, British Red Cross Society and St John's ready and willing to take on a bigger role in civil home defence planning? What assistance do they need at local and national level?
- c. Population Dispersal and Associated Strategy
- i. Is it realistic to believe that the population in threatened areas can be persuaded to "stay put" in a period of emergency? Will not the irrelevance to nuclear attack of any shelter policy we may have the resources to undertake be very obvious?
- ii. What are the best arrangements for giving the general public technical advice on such matters as shelters which will at least prevent people spending money on some of the more doubtful commercial products?
- d. The objectives of home defence planning
- i. Is it realistic to indicate a willingness to take statutory powers unless this is accompanied by a substantial redirection of resources? How will proposals to local authorities to do more be reconciled with exhortations to employ fewer people and spend less?
- ii. What is the strength of feeling on this whole subject among the Government supporters?
- e. Some costed options to achieve the objectives
- i. Do these make sense as a co-ordinated programme or are they a selection of high priority but random measures suggested by different Departments?
- ii. Is there any real significance in the sub division between first and second priority?
- iii. To what extent are Departments able and willing to accommodate these additions in their PESC bids within their existing programmes of Public Expenditure?



## CONCLUSION

6. In his paper, the Home Secretary suggests that this subject may have to be referred to Cabinet to be considered in the context of the forthcoming Public Expenditure Survey. This seems to be a likely outcome. But, subject to points made in discussion, you may find it possible to guide the Committee to agree on sufficient measures to provide the Home Secretary with the material he needs for a Parliamentary statement before the recess. You will also wish to agree that he should report on the outcome of further studies in due course.

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

7 July 1980

*[Handwritten mark]*

PRIME MINISTER

Civil defence is on the OD agenda again this week. You might like to have a glance over the weekend at this long paper.

The key decisions will be public expenditure issues, and will presumably need to be referred to Cabinet. The financial alternatives are summarised in paragraph 23 of annex E.

The conclusions of the study in terms of activity turn on two points:-

- 1) There is scope to harness the potential voluntary effort, but without resurrecting the old civil defence organisation, which is considered costly and bureaucratic;
- 2) The "stay put" policy will remain the main plank of policy, with much more emphasis on effective expansion, and with better planning for the inevitable self evacuation of those who have places to go to outside the city centres.

*[Handwritten signature]*

4 July 1980