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27 March 1985

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CABINET

OFFICIAL GROUP ON COAL

LESSONS OF THE MINERS' STRIKE - MINISTRY OF DEFENCE ASPECTS

Note by the Secretaries

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Attached is a note, prepared by the Ministry of Defence, for discussion at the Group's meeting on 2 April.

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Signed J A J BUDD
J E ROBERTS

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Cabinet Office
27 March 1985

Logistic Assistance

From 16th March 1984 to end March 1985,* Service establishments provided accommodation and/or messing facilities for police brought in from other areas. The initial request, from Nottinghamshire, concerned bed spaces for 2,500 policemen, and as the dispute continued demand increased across the country rising to a peak on 22nd March for 5873 bed spaces. Six Army Districts were involved in this exercise and a total of 39 separate Army or RAF locations were used; a further 17 were identified for possible use and held in reserve.

2. Accommodation and messing facilities were provided on a repayment basis and costs to date are approximately £3 million. The final bill is not expected to exceed £3.5 million, and should be known before the end of April.

3. Due to the widespread police occupation of Service establishments during the summer months a considerable amount of both Regular and TA training was rescheduled or relocated especially in the build up to Exercise LIONHEART. A significant number of ACF and CCF Summer camps were also relocated.

Other Activities

4. Industrial action by dock workers during September meant that LSLs were used to embark troops and equipment for Exercise BOLD GANNET. However only a slight rearrangement of the odd sailing date was necessary to ensure the success of Exercise LIONHEART.

5. In November, following a request from the Secretary of State for Energy, we agreed to provide assistance to the CEGB in connection with the repair of Gas Turbine engines.

Allegations of Service involvement

6. During the course of the dispute frequent allegations were made of Service involvement, particularly that soldiers dressed in police uniforms had assisted on picket line duties; four completely separate incidents served to fuel these allegations:

- a. the first wave followed comments made by an NUM official at a rally in Sunderland in early May when it was alleged that Servicemen had been recognised on police picket line duty;
- b. fresh allegations followed the Miners' rally in London in June. During the course of the rally an EOD (Bomb Disposal) van carrying 2 on-duty Servicemen was caught up in the traffic jams in Parliament Square; protesting miners surrounded the van and claimed the occupants were assisting with the policing of the rally;
- c. more allegations followed in September after the circulation to various MPs of a list claimed to be a duty roster of Servicemen for police picket line duties. The list, which subsequently proved to be handwritten, provided details of Servicemen by name, rank, number and unit, and after lengthy enquiries we were able to identify the source of the information as an out of date TA Regimental Magazine;
- d. finally a photograph featured in two national daily papers showed a policeman wearing riot clothing on duty at Ollerton Colliery; the subject of the photograph was claimed to be a serving soldier.

7. All allegations of Service involvement were completely unfounded, but this did not prevent widespread media and political coverage.

Contingency Planning

8. During April 1984 we considered the various implications should Service assistance be necessary for the movement of coal stocks by road or rail.

Parliamentary Interest

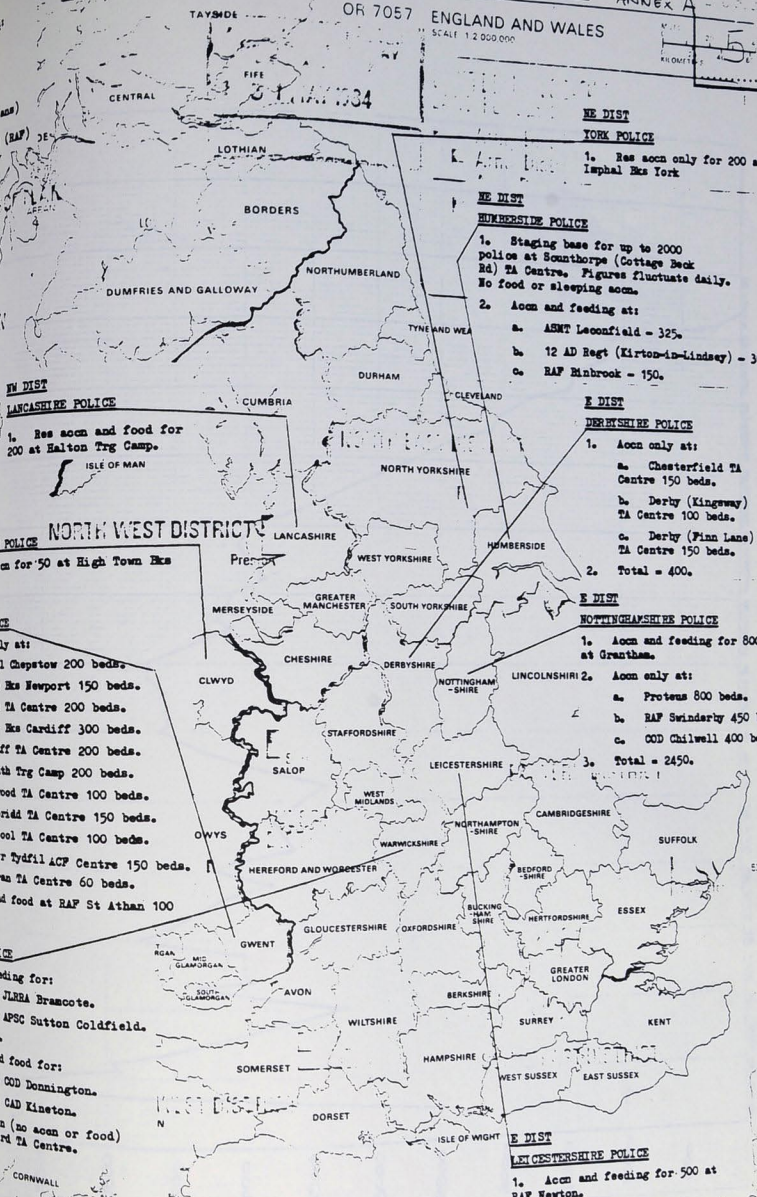
9. Overall, the MOD dealt with some 33 questions in the House about the miners' strike, and over 20 letters to Ministers from MPs.

* As at 20th March, RAF Manston is still providing assistance.

Attachments: Annex A - Typical Deployment Map

Annex B - Chart of Bed Spaces provided

20th March 1985



NE DIST
YORK POLICE
1. Res accon only for 200 at
Isphal Hqs York

NE DIST
MUMBERSIDE POLICE
1. Staging base for up to 2000
police at Southorpe (Cottage Beck
Rd) TA Centre. Figures fluctuate daily.
No food or sleeping accom.
2. Accon and feeding at:
a. AGENT Leonfield - 325.
b. 12 AD Regt (Kirtton-in-Lindsey) - 300.
c. RAP Rimbroke - 150.

E DIST
DERBYSHIRE POLICE
1. Accon only at:
a. Chesterfield TA
Centre 150 beds.
b. Derby (Kingsway)
TA Centre 100 beds.
c. Derby (Pinn Lane)
TA Centre 150 beds.
2. Total = 400.

E DIST
NOTTINGHAMSHIRE POLICE
1. Accon and feeding for 800
at Grantham.
2. Accon only at:
a. Proteus 800 beds.
b. RAP Swindery 450 beds.
c. OOD Chilwell 400 beds.
3. Total = 2450.

E DIST
LEICESTERSHIRE POLICE
1. Accon and feeding for 500 at
RAP Newton.
2. Accon only for 100 at Combs Sy
Op Loughborough.
3. Total = 600.

EW DIST
LANCASHIRE POLICE
1. Res accon and food for
200 at Bailton Trg Camp.
ISLE OF MAN

W VALS POLICE
Res accon for 50 at High Town Hqs
Walsley.

W VALS POLICE
Res accon only at:
a. All Coll Chepstow 200 beds.
b. Baglan Hqs Newport 150 beds.
c. Malpas TA Centre 200 beds.
d. Malpas Hqs Cardiff 300 beds.
e. Llandaff TA Centre 200 beds.
f. Monmouth Trg Camp 200 beds.
g. Blackwood TA Centre 100 beds.
h. Postypriad TA Centre 150 beds.
i. Postypool TA Centre 100 beds.
j. Merthyr Tydfil ACP Centre 150 beds.
k. Cwmbran TA Centre 60 beds.
l. Res accon and food at RAP St Athan 100

W VALS POLICE
Accon and feeding for:
a. 250 at JLRA Bracombe.
b. 300 at APSC Sutton Coldfield.
Total = 550.
Accon and food for:
a. 300 at OOD Donnington.
b. 184 at CAD Kineton.
c. Location (no accon or food)
at Salford TA Centre.

Notes
1. Total number of police accommodated is 4775.
2. This figure will reduce to about 4000 during
the holiday period 28 May - 4 Jun but will return
to 4775 thereafter.

