

CONFIDENTIAL



Transport  
Defence  
BF 8/6/79 m

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

6 June 1979

Dear John.

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Civil Contingencies Unit

The Prime Minister has decided to reactivate the Civil Contingencies Unit in the Cabinet Office and she would be very grateful if the Home Secretary would take on the role of Ministerial Chairman of the Unit.

The Prime Minister would like the Home Secretary in this capacity to bring together the Ministers concerned with the impending London Underground strike. She is particularly concerned about the inter-action of such a strike with a sympathetic or parallel strike on London buses and a concurrent shortage of petrol and diesel oil which would stand in the way of private transport filling the gap. She is also aware that the direct responsibility for London Transport rests with the GLC, and that if the Underground employees' claims were met without compensating savings on manning, there would have to be rises in either fares or rates or both. It would be appropriate, therefore, for Mr. Whitelaw to convene a Contingency Unit meeting with the Minister of Transport, the Secretaries of State for Energy, Environment and Employment present, to assess the situation and its possible development and consider how the Government should deal with it both operationally and in terms of presentation of the case to the general public. In this connection, she would like the Paymaster General also to be involved.

The Prime Minister would be glad to have a report from the Home Secretary by the evening of Friday 8 June.

I am copying this minute to the Private Secretaries to the Minister of Transport, the Secretaries of State for Energy, Environment and Employment, the Paymaster General and to Sir John Hunt.

You will already have received a copy of Tim Lankester's letter to Mrs. Flanagan (Ministry of Transport) of 4 June asking for a report by the end of this week. The arrangements set out in this letter supersede those in the earlier letter.

Yours sincerely,  
Ken Stone

KRB

John Chilcot, Esq.,  
Home Office.

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