



20/11/1

NSPM

N. J. [Signature]NOV 25
/11.FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH SECRETARYDEFENCE COMMUNICATIONS CENTRE (DCC)

The automated DCC in the Ministry of Defence was established some years ago with numbers and a grading hierarchy that was to be validated by staff inspection once the organisation had bedded down. A staff inspection has now taken place

I am therefore writing to let you know how I propose to proceed.

2. The DCC was staff inspected first in late-1975. The inspectors recommended large-scale reductions in numbers as well as extensive downgradings. Both provoked fierce opposition from the trades unions and at one stage there was even a short walk-out of the staff from this vital Defence organisation. Subsequent patient attempts to process the report further were cut short at the behest of the then-CSD when they initiated a Government-wide review of all communications grades which unfortunately collapsed some years later. Rather than reopen discussions on an out-of-date report which predated the rundown in Civil Service numbers, we commissioned a fresh staff inspection. The subsequent report by a completely new team of inspectors has just been agreed with management. It too recommends downgradings throughout the structure, and despite a rundown in numbers (which has affected the DCC in common with the rest of MOD) the inspectors find room for yet more staff savings. I have decided that the inspectors' proposals should be pursued, recognising the risk that there will be industrial action as a result. Contingency plans have been prepared to maintain an emergency communications service.

3.

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While I would not want to delay action for too long, I should be happy to wait until we can see the Union's reaction to that announcement and consider any read across for the DCC issue.

4. I am copying this minute to the Prime Minister, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, the Minister of State Privy Council Office and Sir Robert Armstrong.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be "W. H. ...".

Ministry of Defence
24th January 1984