



*Deputy*  
Prime Minister.

MO 2/4

PRIME MINISTER

*In organization news I think the NCB is absolutely right in what he is saying. It is more difficult when we get to personalities. I have spoken to the Chief Whip who is ready to come over for a work tomorrow morning. May I arrange this?*

MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE  
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

*AKL*  
*21.1.*

I consider there would be great advantage in taking the opportunity afforded by Keith Speed's departure to make a fundamental re-organisation of Ministerial responsibilities in the Ministry of Defence.

2. From my point of view changes would best be made sooner rather than later if I am to be able successfully to carry forward the reshaping of the Defence programme on which I am now embarked; and you may also consider - if you agree that changes should be made - that they might conveniently be announced during next week's Recess, possibly on Wednesday or Thursday. We got through this week's Defence Debate quite well but we must, I would suggest, keep the initiative.

3. What I think would make much more sense than the present structure here would be two Ministers of State, one for the Armed Services (primarily personnel and logistics, and who would run the Service Boards) and one for Defence Procurement, each of them supported by a single Parliamentary Under-Secretary. ~~This would reduce my Ministers by one, but upgrade one of them.~~

4. I could rehearse the arguments for such a structure, but you will, I think, be familiar with them. In essence they are that it would be easier to formulate a 'defence', as opposed



to a 'single Service' view, and to keep this large Department under better political control and direction, than the present structure allows. A change would have to be properly presented to the Service Boards, but if it were, I would foresee no real problems on that front.

5. I understand that the creation of an additional Minister of State might bring you over the top on Minister of State numbers, but I suggest from my previous experience in Trade (and I think that John Biffen would feel as I did) that a compensating reduction could be made there. I would, of course, be delighted to have Cecil Parkinson here. It may also be felt that the Foreign Office has more than the necessary number of Ministers of State.

6. On personalities, I think that Tom Trenchard, in view of his very recent appointment, must remain where he is, although Geoffrey Pattie could do this job well. That means, if you agree, that you would be looking for a Minister of State for the Armed Services. At the top of my own list for this post would be Douglas Hurd, but I know that Peter Carrington, quite understandably, would be reluctant to release him. (I do not think Nicholas Ridley would be a good choice for MOD). I have already mentioned Cecil Parkinson, and among other existing Ministers of State I would be very content with either Tom King or Alick Buchanan-Smith. You will understand that in current circumstances this would be a very delicate and major post.

7. So far as Parliamentary Under Secretaries are concerned I would very much like to see David Hunt advanced, and I know that Michael Jopling would support me in this. Would you be prepared to consider him?



8. If such changes were made Geoffrey Pattie's job would disappear. As I mentioned above I would have been happy to see him as Minister for Defence Procurement, but I do not think that you would wish to displace Tom Trenchard at this juncture; and I do not believe that Geoffrey Pattie would, for various reasons, be acceptable to the Royal Navy as <sup>Parliamentary Secretary</sup> Minister for the Armed Forces. I suggest, therefore, that you might consider transferring him to another Department - perhaps to Trade if John Biffen were to lose a Minister of State where I think that Geoffrey would do very well. The other choice would be to make Geoffrey Pattie the deputy of Tom Trenchard.

9. I am sorry to add yet further to your burdens with such a jigsaw puzzle. This leaves the question of Philip Goodhart. In my view he would be acceptable to the Armed Services as the Parliamentary Secretary but he would be rather less suitable on Procurement. I think you will understand my reasons for making these proposals at this stage. I am, of course, at your disposal should you wish to discuss.

/ 10. I attach an organizational diagram.

11. I am sending a copy of this minute to Michael Jopling, but to no-one else.

Ministry of Defence

21st May 1981

PROPOSED NEW STRUCTURE

Minister for the Armed Services

Minister for Defence Procurement

(Douglas Hurd  
Cecil Parkinson  
Alick Buchanan-Smith  
Tom King)

Tom Trenchard  
(Geoffrey Pattie)

Parliamentary Under Secretary  
for the Armed Services

Parliamentary Under Secretary  
for Defence Procurement

(Philip Goodhart  
David Hunt)

(Geoffrey Pattie  
David Hunt)

*Michael Mann - PC note w/*

*PM NW B-S - needed for press*

*My: Parkinson will be good for the equipment job - arms sales.  
17. Trenchard good or better. Knows industry. Think will be best of names mentioned  
my: think will see it is dangerous.  
my: possible. King will be best. But will probably see it is dangerous.*

Extract of memo (M/SS) reference 10.2.81

Subject filed as Defence.  
Oct 79: Future UK Army  
Defence

Ministerial Organisation in the Ministry of Defence

The Defence Secretary said that he would be approaching the Prime Minister in the summer to ask her to abolish single Service Ministers. He wished to move to a Ministerial organisation based on a Minister of State for Procurement, a Minister of State for the Armed Services, and two Parliamentary Under-Secretaries. He would also be seeking changes in personalities: at present he had the worst <sup>(practical)</sup> team in Whitehall.

The Defence Secretary said that he was resisting pressure from CDS to confirm his successor now, and to decide at the same time on the next generation of single Service Chiefs. He had not yet decided whether to build up the role of the CDS or to abolish the post. One or other course was necessary. The Prime Minister counselled the Defence Secretary against building a rival to himself. The Defence Secretary commented that the abolition of the post of CDS would enable him to get rid of a lot of bureaucrats. The Prime Minister enquired about the attitude of The Queen. The Defence Secretary said that he was given to understand the the Palace would not create difficulties.

Paul

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Prime Minister.  
*Defence*  
2m

From  
THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PARTY

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PT/SO

1st June 1981

To/....  
The Prime Minister

*mb*

*Dear Margaret*

I did mean to say this morning, though we were  
diverted into other more pressing topics, how  
much I agreed with what you have done in the  
Ministry of Defence. It was always a mistake  
to have the Ministers representing the separate  
Services and bound to lead to trouble sooner or  
later. Only the strong lobbying of the  
individual Services really prevented us from  
attempting the kind of set-up, you have got now,  
from the very start.

*Yours. J.*

*Optimum*