



Prime Minister

Sir Robert Armstrong's advice is attached below. Do

MO 15/3

PRIME MINISTER

you agree  
 Mr. Holt  
 i. That ~~that~~ should offer this briefing to the Cabinet when the PESC discussions are concluded  
 ii. with Sir Robert Armstrong's advice that the briefing should take place in the Cabinet Office Briefing room rather than in MOD? *Yes Mr FERB*

INTELLIGENCE BRIEFING FOR THE CABINET

13.10.

Several Members of the Cabinet have spoken to me about the briefing we gave them on Trident, in particular about Soviet capability. We could provide a high security briefing on Soviet conventional and chemical capability of very great interest to the Cabinet - clearing the material with the US in advance. I feel that the Cabinet should - indeed is entitled to - know more about the problems which we face in the defence field. At the same time you would not wish, nor would I, for any such briefing to be seen as a bid by the MOD for more money.

2. Would you be prepared to contemplate a two-hour briefing session for the Cabinet on these issues (similar to those given to other NATO cabinets) sometime in the latter half of November when the PESC discussions have been concluded?

*Yes Mr*

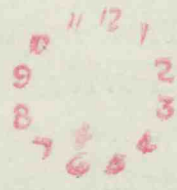
*SN.*

Ministry of Defence  
8th October 1982



From: [illegible]  
 To: [illegible]  
 Subject: [illegible]  
 The [illegible] should offer [illegible]  
 to the [illegible] when the [illegible] [illegible]  
 is [illegible] with the [illegible] [illegible]  
 the [illegible] should be [illegible] in the [illegible]  
 [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

58 OCT 1982



**SECRET**

M. - Coler ASL 15/10.  
Thanks. I have now  
written to MOD  
FERB 14.10

MR BUTLER

After his meeting with the Prime Minister this afternoon, the Secretary of State for Defence asked me what her reaction had been to the proposal that he should provide a briefing for the Cabinet on Soviet defence capability. I said that my understanding was that the Prime Minister had agreed that such a briefing would be useful and that it should be given in the Cabinet Office Briefing Room after a Cabinet with a light agenda. Mr. Nott said that he would need about 75 minutes for the briefing and would like to give it in the second half of November.

A. J. C.

14 October 1982

**SECRET**



Defence  
cc

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Principal Private Secretary*

14 October 1982

The Prime Minister has seen your Secretary of State's minute of 8 October proposing an intelligence briefing for the Cabinet about Soviet capability, when the public expenditure discussions have been concluded.

The Prime Minister agrees that it would be useful to offer this briefing to members of the Cabinet, but she would wish knowledge of it to be as restricted as possible. With this in mind, she would prefer that the briefing was held in the Cabinet Office Briefing Room after a Cabinet, on a day when there is a light agenda. This would enable members of the Cabinet to come in and go out by the front door of 10 Downing Street in the usual way.

In view of this, I am sending a copy of this letter to Sir Robert Armstrong.

E. E. R. BUTLER

Richard Mottram, Esq.,  
Ministry of Defence.

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Ref. A09736

MR. BUTLER

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You asked for my comments on the Secretary of State for Defence's <sup>with RB?</sup> minute of 8 October to the Prime Minister, suggesting a two-hour briefing session for the Cabinet on Soviet conventional and chemical capability.

2. I have no doubt that it would be useful for the Cabinet to be briefed on this subject, though it would be important to emphasise the high degree of security involved.

3. It would be important to keep the knowledge of such briefing as restricted as possible. If the whole of the Cabinet troop into the Ministry of Defence - which I gather is what is proposed - that is liable to be rather conspicuous, and may give rise to press or Parliamentary speculation. We might be able to limit this risk by holding the briefing in the Cabinet Office Briefing Room after a Cabinet with a light agenda: members of the Cabinet could then come in and go out by the front door of 10 Downing Street in the usual way.

RA

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

13 October 1982

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