

file LPO
BC No
14



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

MR. HATFIELD
CABINET OFFICE

WITHSTANDING AN OIL TANKER DRIVERS' STRIKE

The Prime Minister has seen Sir Robert Armstrong's minute of 13 October which covered a report by officials. She has also seen the replies from other Ministers. She agrees that the objective should be to withstand a long strike and agrees to the principle of using Service drivers to maintain something like 70 per cent of normal road-borne deliveries.

She also agrees that the Civil Contingencies Unit should undertake the work suggested. She has noted the suggestion of the Secretary of State for Defence that the CCU should consider a plan for a graduated response and she would like this to be looked at. She also supports the suggestion that CCU should look at the provisions of the Emergency Powers Act.

I am sending copies of this minute to Mr. Taylor (Home Office), Mr. Kerr (H.M. Treasury), Mr. Reidy (Department of Energy), Mr. Mottram (Ministry of Defence), Mr. Graham (Scottish Office), Mr. Shaw (Department of Employment), Mr. McCarthy (Department of Trade and Industry) and Miss Nichols (Department of Transport)

AT

ANDREW TURNBULL

10 November 1983

CT.

PRIME MINISTER

WITHSTANDING AN OIL TANKER DRIVERS' STRIKE

In his minute of 13 October, Sir Robert Armstrong reported on the work of officials on withstanding an oil tanker drivers' strike. The report is summarised at Flag A. The group recommended that Ministers consider a higher level of endurance than is provided for in existing plans. The nature of the oil industry is such that supplies at petrol stations last only two or three days and so a strike has a very rapid effect. The group suggested that supplies be maintained at about 70% of normal road-borne supplies.

Achievement of this would require greater use of Service drivers; an increase in driver training; and in some circumstances withdrawal of drivers from BAOR.

Sir Robert Armstrong sought the agreement of Ministers to this higher level of endurance; and for the Civil Contingencies Unit to explore how it could be done and the implications of using Service drivers.

Replies have come in from all the relevant Ministers (these are attached though you need read only the reply from Mr. Heseltine). All support the objective of a higher level of endurance and agree that CCU should carry out the additional work.

Mr. Heseltine, while endorsing the general objectives has suggested that CCU should also look at a graduated response.

Agree CCU should look at the implications of withstanding a long strike and the associated use of Service drivers?
 Agree the graduated response should also be looked at?

9 November 1983