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PRIME MINISTER

CONTINGENCY PLANNING FOR AN OIL TANKER DRIVERS' STRIKE

I have seen a copy of Sir Robert Armstrong's minute to you of 3 July enclosing a report by a Working Group of the Civil Contingencies Unit.

I welcome the conclusion of the work done so far that it should be possible to attain a considerably higher level of delivery by given numbers of service drivers than had hitherto been assumed. This should help reduce the economic damage and hardship to individuals arising from strike action and prolong endurance. I am content that work should proceed to draw up more detailed plans, and I hope it will be possible to complete it by the time the first negotiations in the next pay round are under way. Given the likelihood that negotiations will be spread out over a longer period than in previous years it is most important that these plans should provide for a flexible response.

I agree that, in addition to the legal issues involved, we should consider further the possibility of obtaining oil delivery vehicles without recourse to requisitioning. The views of the oil companies on this will be very important and my officials are taking steps to consult them through the Oil Industry Emergency Committee.

I am sending copies of this minute to the Home Secretary, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the Secretaries of State for Defence, Scotland, Trade and Industry, Employment and Transport and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR ENERGY

16 July 1984

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