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APS/MINISTER(AF)OPERATION CORPORATE: RECALL MEASURES

The Secretary of State has seen your minute of the 10th April. He was grateful to your Minister for informing him of developments in this matter.

2. The Secretary of State agrees with Mr Blaker that we should, if possible, delay the recall of necessary RFR and RN Pensioners until the 19th April. He would, however, want all necessary preparations to be made with a view to a decision to proceed on or soon after that date. He agrees that we should be prepared to move more quickly if it becomes apparent that delay will be caused to the sailing of the requisitioned ships by shortages of key personnel.

3. In the case of the call out of Reserve Officers the Secretary of State similarly agrees that work should proceed as quickly as possible to produce the necessary statutory instruments but that no overt action should be taken until after Parliament has re-assembled. The Secretary of State would be grateful if your Minister could continue to oversee the work which is going on in this area, reporting to him as necessary.

NHR Evans

13th April 1982

(N H R EVANS)
APS/S of S



SECRETARY OF STATE

OPERATION CORPORATE: RECALL MEASURES

Below is a note representing Minister(AF)'s views on two Departmental submissions on:-

- a. Recall of Special Class of the Royal Fleet Reserve (RFR) and RN Pensioners. ————— *Flag A*
- b. Call Out of Reserve Officers. ————— *Flag B*

Recall of Special Class of the RFR and RN Pensioners

2. The submission seeks agreement to recall some members of the Special Class of the RFR. The initial requirement is for about 100 trained communications branch ratings, and about 200 other operations branch and maintenance ratings; these would include a small number of pensioners. The ratings are required to provide a secure communications cell for ships requisitioned from trade and to man operational standard ships brought forward from refit. The operations branch ratings would provide a core of experienced ratings in case other ships (some on disposal and sale lists) are activated.

3. As the submission makes clear the Royal Navy has looked very carefully at providing communicators from serving ratings, but have concluded that there would be insufficient numbers.

4. Minister(AF), having considered the submission, has recommended waiting until Parliament has reassembled on 19th April before taking any action that would make the recall public. Minister(AF) selected the date of 19th April to coincide with Parliament's return, but if Parliament is to be reconvened earlier the date for initiating recall action could similarly be advanced. I am sure that, unless operational pressures increase markedly, it would be inadvisable - so soon after the Debate last Wednesday - to make any announcement at all on this while Parliament is in Recess.



Call Out of Reserve Officers

5. The second submission sets out to correct faults in the existing legislation on recall of Naval Reserve Officers. The submission does not seek Ministerial endorsement of a call-out, but merely seeks to provide the enabling legislation which would form the basis of any subsequent submission to Ministers. As the submission explains, call-out is permitted only in the event of an attack or impending attack "on the United Kingdom". It is this that the enabling legislation would seek to correct.

6. Two actions would be required: a new Order in Council ~~and~~ ^{and,} ~~the~~ signature (by you) ~~of~~ Regulations under Section 46 of the Reserve Forces Act 1980.

7. Minister(AF) has recommended that the enabling legislation should be proceeded with as soon as possible.

8. Are you content for Minister(AF) to push ahead with both of these, advising you of further steps to be taken as they fall due later this week - with an early announcement of the proposed action being made to Parliament?

DL

11th April 1982

(D T P)



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D/MIN(AF)/PB/5/1/5

APS/Secretary of StateOPERATION CORPORATE: RECALL MEASURES

1. We discussed last night and this morning the problem of the recall of the special class of the Royal Fleet Reserve and RN pensioners, and of Reserve Officers. I have consulted Minister(AF) and this minute represents his views.

Recall of Special Class of RFR and RN Pensioners

2. I enclose of a copy of a submission from Head of NMT, ^{Naval Manpower & Training} together with a minute indicating VCNS' endorsement, which explains in detail the operational requirement for the recall. The procedure would only be invoked after it had been thoroughly established that no suitable personnel were available from within the regular Navy. We are obliged to report any such recall (after the event) to Parliament. To do so during the recess would lay us open to the risk of alienating support within the House (particularly as it would come so soon after the debate last Wednesday). To delay action until 19th April carries with it a slight risk in operational terms, in that the departure of requisitioned ships might be delayed because of shortages of key trades. Three options therefore present themselves:

- a. to give early agreement and report the recall to Parliament during the recess (see paragraph 13 of the submission)
- b. to wait until 19th April
- c. as at (b), but on the understanding that if operational pressures increased during the next week to the extent that there would be a perceptible risk that ships will be delayed from sailing, Ministers would be prepared to reconsider option (a)

3. Minister(AF) is inclined to support the compromise solution at (c) above. He does however feel that this subject should be brought to the Secretary of State's attention. Even if option (a) is adopted, I understand that final Ministerial approval could be deferred until Monday, 12th April. Recall

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notices have to be sent by registered post and provided that HMS CENFURION receives instructions reasonably early on Monday, 19th April, these can be sent out on Tuesday, 20th April.

4. Whichever option is adopted, the recall measure may be wrongly interpreted publicly as a necessary consequence of the reductions in naval manpower announced by this Government. There will therefore be a need for a very careful PR presentation of this measure.

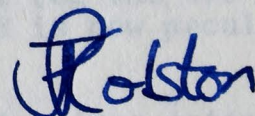
Call Out of Reserve Officers

5. Many of these considerations also apply to the second submission, a copy of which I have attached to this minute. However this submission sets out only to set to rights faults in the existing legislation (here the Navy is at a disadvantage compared with the other Services), to enable reserve officers and officers on the Retired and Emergency Lists to be recalled. The submission does not in itself seek Ministerial endorsement of a call out measure, but merely seeks to provide the enabling legislation which would form the basis of any subsequent submission to Ministers.

6. Although neither of the measures proposed in the submission require Parliament to be informed, Minister(AF) believes that there is the operational requirement is not sufficiently pressing to justify making an announcement during the recess. The Order in Council (paragraph 3a) could not be completed without public knowledge; the regulations under S46 of the Reserve Forces Act 1980 could be signed by the Secretary of State without any public announcement although the recall itself (if agreed) would soon become public knowledge.

7. Minister(AF) is inclined to agree that it would be a sensible precautionary measure to proceed with the enabling legislation as soon as possible in order to clear the way for rapid call up if this is required, although he believes that no overt action should be taken until 19th April. He would however wish the Secretary of State to be aware of the suggested course of action in advance of the proposals being taken further.

8. I understand that in the case of both submissions there is no need for prior consultation with other Government Departments although the Treasury and the Department of Employment will be consulted. Present legislation provides fully for the protection of the regular employment of the reservists. After recall the reservists will be entitled to all benefits and rights normally enjoyed by Naval personnel.



J P COLSTON
APS/Minister(AF)

10 April 1982