

PRIME MINISTER

*Discussed further
with PM. Warned
Mr Martin's office that PM would return
to the charge if manpower cuts offerings
seemed inadequate. 11/17/79*

S. R. G. Green

*1. Govt.
Mach.*

Can I clarify the basis on which you would like the

Directorate of Overseas Surveys critically examined for a reduction? On the positive side, adequate mapping is of great assistance for economic development. Britain has special expertise and experience, and this is therefore a service which many developing countries welcome as part of our aid to them. If it was not available from this Government body, it is doubtful whether much would be picked up by UK private sector companies: more would get financed by other countries who are developing some capacity in this field (e.g. Canada).

On the negative side, it employs a lot of people with specialised skills.

Do you feel that this is not the type of activity which we should be supporting within the public sector as a facility for assisting other countries; or is your criticism simply of the scale of manpower employed in maintaining this capacity?

MP

10 August 1979

*It is far better that
those countries develop their
own capacity to map and
that when they do so they employ
all the latest techniques (Laser Scan
etc) which seem unjustly left
(downside: their own). Further*

*I fail to see why 10 million of our aid should be
or could be for that purpose etc)*

PRIME MINISTER

When you discussed dispersal with Messrs. Younger and Channon several weeks ago, you queried the inclusion of the Directorate of Overseas Surveys in the dispersal programme. You felt this sounded like a candidate for winding up.

I asked the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to provide a note about the DOS work, and the demand for it. The attached response claims that there is still a substantial demand from developing countries for the specialist service which DOS can provide. It is one of a group of specialist institutions which have existed for some time, and now work under the auspices of ODA. They are not particularly expensive in themselves, and their costs are met under the aid votes, but they do employ significant numbers of civil servants - many in specialist grades. (The other bodies in question include the Tropical Products Institute, the Centre for Overseas Pest Research and the Land Resources Division.) The work done in these various units has a high reputation internationally, and is a relatively inexpensive and effective part of our aid effort, providing technical help rather than high cost capital goods. The value of the institutions is probably not in doubt, unless you want them examined purely as part of the exercise of reviewing staff numbers in the civil service.

Do you want to take this any further as an individual subject, or leave it to be considered in the context of the Lord President's "further cuts" exercise?

MAD

Looks like a

*candidate - for very
severe diminution*

*Perhaps you would let the
Lord President know - his
it can be relevant for the
next round.*

3 August 1979

MANAGEMENT IN CONFIDENCE



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

2 August 1979

Dear Mike,

Directorate of Overseas Surveys

Thank you for your letter of 19 July.

I attach a note for the Prime Minister about the functions of the Directorate of Overseas Surveys and the likely future demand for its services. A copy has been sent to Geoffrey Green in Mr Channon's office.

Yours as

P Lever
Private Secretary

M Pattison Esq
10 Downing Street

MANAGEMENT IN CONFIDENCE

DIRECTORATE OF OVERSEAS SURVEYS

1. The Directorate is one of five Special and Scientific Units which are part of the Overseas Development Administration. Its staff of some 360 are Home Civil Servants. Its activities are in support of the aid programme and are financed from the Overseas Aid Vote at an annual cost of about £3.6 million. On occasions the private sector turns to the Directorate for information and advice which is supplied on a repayment basis.

free?
why?

2. The Directorate continues to do invaluable work by mapping the developing countries, for maps are indispensable in planning economic development. Since it was set up in 1946 it has mapped, or re-mapped, well over 2 million square miles of territory. While most of its work relates to former British colonies, it is now active in countries such as the Sudan, Liberia and the Yemen Arab Republic and this widening of its area of operations is likely to continue. As a matter of policy the Directorate seeks to devolve as much work as possible to the Survey Departments of overseas Governments and thus to build up local map-making capacities, rather than do the whole task itself.

Functions

3. The stages by which the Directorate makes its maps are:-

- (i) Air photography, carried out by commercial firms working under contract with the Directorate;
- (ii) Ground Survey, the labour of which is nowadays greatly shortened by the use of modern electronic equipment;
- (iii) Field completion, ie the addition of local detail (names etc) to the information in the air photographs, always carried out by the Survey Departments of Overseas Governments;
- (iv) Map drawing, undertaken at the Directorate with much elaborate equipment and wherever possible shared with overseas Governments;
- (v) Reproduction, undertaken by the Ordnance Survey at Southampton and paid for by the Ministry of Defence.

/In addition



In addition to these map-making functions, the Directorate provides advisory services and information on all aspects of topographical surveying and mapping overseas, to both the public and private sectors. It also offers valuable training facilities at Tolworth for staff from overseas, and advises the Overseas Development Administration and the British Council on training generally in its field.

Likely demand for future services

4. The Directorate has at present in its programme firm and negotiable commitments extending into 1988 and the demand for its services shows no sign of decreasing in the medium-term future. For the longer term, UN statistics show that requirements for mapping in the under-developed countries will extend to at least the end of this century and the indications are that the Directorate's services which have proved so valuable in the past will continue to be needed for a similar period of time.

Overseas Development Administration
31 July 1979

12 AUG 1979

