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CABINET

MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC STRATEGY

CIVIL CONTINGENCY PLANNING

Note by the Secretary of State for the  
Home Department

At the E Committee of 16 October (E(80) 37th Meeting, Item 5), I undertook to arrange for the Civil Contingencies Unit (CCU) to ensure that contingency planning for dealing with emergencies which might arise in the coming winter was fully up to date. This note summarising the present position is circulated to colleagues for information.

2. The annual review of plans to mitigate the effects of industrial action against essential supplies and services was completed by sponsor Departments in September. The results are published in summaries in the Cabinet Office Emergencies Book, which is held by all CCU Departments who sponsor essential industries and services.

3. I should like to remind colleagues of the point made in my report last year (E(79) 48). The CCU is concerned only with the consequences of industrial disputes (or other emergencies) and then only when they threaten supplies and services deemed to be essential to the life of the community. Contingency plans cannot maintain essential services at the normal level. They give limited short-term protection against the effects of certain types of strike and ensure that the Government is not completely at the mercy of all threats to essential supplies and services. But there are some threats which cannot adequately be countered by contingency plans (eg to the generation of electricity); and few which could be countered indefinitely.

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4. The official study attached to my report last year described 4 specific ways of moderating the immediate effects of an industrial stoppage. Developments under these headings over the past 12 months can be summarised as follows -

i. Statutory controls. Although the Attorney General and I had concluded that there was no serious defect in the existing Emergency Powers Acts we have asked officials to consider and report on the advisability of a wider definition of the range of supplies and services which may be considered to be "essential to the life of the community". Meanwhile, the annual review of the text of the Emergency Regulations to be made under the 1920 Act is nearing completion, which will enable the text of the Regulations to be printed by 1 January 1981, on schedule.

ii. Stockpiling essential supplies. Contingency plans cover stocks of 5 resources: fuel, some food and emergency hospital supplies. There have been no changes as regards the last of these but their size and composition may increase following a departmental review in the context of home defence planning. On the strategic food stockpile the level of sugar stocks has been increased by 45,500 tons to 127,000 tons and 12,000 tons of salt have been acquired. On the other hand, the economic recession has caused industry and commerce significantly to reduce the level of stocks in most areas so that, if deliveries were cut off by strike action, shortages would occur at retail outlets sooner than before. In general, this also applies to fuel stocks. But at power stations coal stocks are currently 2.4 million tons (16 per cent) higher than a year ago. Oil stocks are marginally lower. Power station endurance would of course depend on the time of year. But the main limiting factor would probably be ancillary supplies. These are sufficient to last 5-6 weeks. Provision of larger stocks is inhibited primarily by financial considerations but also by storage space and the volatility of some items.

iii. Providing alternative resources. The effectiveness of arrangements to provide stand-by power for essential services continues to improve as more permanent sets are installed in place of mobile generators. National Health Service hospitals could continue to function reasonably well

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whilst subjected to planned intermittent cuts in electricity supply. There is of course a limit to the time standby generators could cope with long and repeated power cuts.

iv. Bringing in substitute labour. All existing last resort plans for Military Aid to Civil Ministries have been revised, except for one (covering dock work) which is still under review. These plans relate only to 14 specific areas, see Annex A; and several of them depend crucially on supervisory staff remaining at work and thus being available to instruct Servicemen. Procedures for confidential consultations (which are an essential prerequisite to the deployment of Servicemen) have been simplified. Department of Transport instructions to Traffic Commissioners for an emergency scheme to cover the distribution of oil in the event of a tanker drivers' strike have been revised and re-issued. Conclusions on the use of volunteers during industrial disputes are being reported separately.

5. On 30 October (CCU(80) 9th Meeting) Ministers whose Departments sponsor supplies and services essential to the life of the community, agreed to examine again the scope for further contingency planning. This could lead in due course to a greater number of pre-planned Service operations or other improvements in our state of preparedness.

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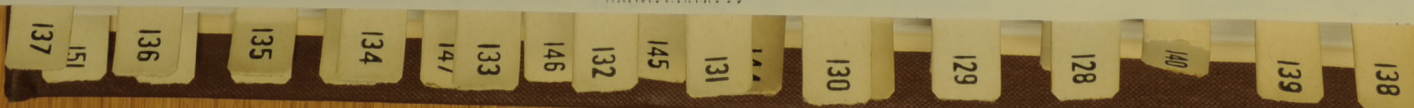
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SERIAL	CODEWORD	SUBJECT	CLIENT	MANPOWER REQUIREMENT				REMARKS
				SKILLED	DRIVERS	UNSKILLED	TOTAL	
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)	(h)	(i)
1.	YOGA	Operation of MOO/Government Switchboards	Cabinet Office	144	-	-	144	
2.	VEEVIL	Production of essential HMSO papers	CSO	75	-	5	80	
3.	PANORY	Operation of DOE (PSA) standby generating plant	DOE	400	-	-	400	
4.	VIBRATE	Maintenance of Gas Supply Safety	DEn	1330	550	3550	5430	Familiarisation training needed.
5.	LIGHEL	Replacement of Hospital Ancillary Staff	DMSS/ SHHD/WO	2821	830	3788	7439	
6.	CONCORD	Operation of Emergency Ambulance Services	DMSS/ SHHD/WO	-	2170	2000	4170	Uses NHS owned ambulances.
7.	BETTERN	Operation of Emergency Ambulance Services	DMSS/ SHHD/WO	-	984	984	1968	Uses Service ambulances.
8.	PEPPER	Construction of London Car Park	DOE	30	50	200	280	Numbers reduced in dry weather.
9.	SCARAB	Alternative Fire Services	HO/SHHD	1626	1626	6504	9756	Familiarisation training needed.



(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)	(h)	(i)
10.	KEEIMAN	Operation of Water and Sewage Plant	DOE/SED/VO/MAPP	3754	1983	3716	9458	
11.	LEADBOEN	Distribution of Oil Stocks	DEn	600	4500	4500	9600	Requisitioning of vehicles essential. Training of instructors and familiarisation training needed.
12.	HALBERD	Unloading selected items from Ships in Docks	DTp	4535	1677	8646	11858	Under review Manpower figures to be reduced substantially. Familiarisation training needed.
13.	BEANSTALK	Movement of essential supplies by road	DTp	-	10000	10000	20000	Statement of capabilities only. May require re-quisioning of vehicles
14.	HORNBLLOWER	Clearance of motorways and trunk roads during bad weather	DTp/WD	85	460	460	1005	Training of instructors and familiarisation training needed.

Note: All manpower figures are working numbers. An additional 20% should be added as a planning figure for command/control administration etc.

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