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17 JANUARY 1980

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DEFENCE AND OVERSEA POLICY COMMITTEE

STATEMENT ON THE DEFENCE ESTIMATES 1980

Note by the Secretary of State for Defence

1. I attach for early consideration by the Committee the draft of my Statement on the Defence Estimates for 1980.
2. Volume I of the draft sets out our policy for defence, describes the make-up and deployment of our defence forces, and explains the reasons for both - all in some detail. It seeks to offer a much more coherent basic explanation of policy and roles than the Statements of our predecessors. I have emphasised the importance we attach to defence, and pointed up our approach to important areas of policy such as nuclear weapons (which our predecessors artificially played down), the Soviet threat to our interests outside the NATO area, and our determination to ensure that the Services receive proper rewards and public recognition. I have done this in the light of the Committee's discussion in December. I have expressed a positive attitude to the defence programme throughout the Statement, but without giving particular hostages to fortune. I have been frank about the problems we face, including the possible effect of economic factors.
3. Volume II of the draft contains a great deal of statistical data about defence, which will both support the account of our defence activity in Volume I, and be interesting in itself. Many of the tables have been published previously in a piecemeal

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... fashion but some present new information and this is the first
... defence data of this kind have been put together under one
... cover.

I hope the Committee will agree that this Statement on the
... defence Estimates for 1980 successfully projects the fresh
... approach to defence to which we are committed, and that it does
... in a way which will encourage a well-informed public
... discussion of defence, which will in turn engender a wider
... understanding of the purpose of our defence capability and the
... effort necessary to sustain it. Subject to the Committee's views
... would propose to publish it on 27th February. This means that
... contrary to recent precedent the Statement will not show figures
... for planned defence expenditure beyond the next financial year,
... which will be published in March in the Public Expenditure White
... Paper II. I have taken the view that the balance of advantage
... is in favour of publication to the usual timetable without the
... figures rather than later publication with them.

FP

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

17 JANUARY 1980

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INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1: THE CONTEXT OF BRITAIN'S DEFENCE POLICY

- The Warsaw Pact
- The North Atlantic Alliance
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DEFENCE IN THE 1980S

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- Strategic Defence Policy
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STATEMENT ON THE DEFENCE ESTIMATES 1980

VOLUME I

Chapter 3: THE CENTRAL REGION

- RAF Germany
- The British Contribution to the Central Region
- Exercises and Training

Chapter 4: NORTH ATLANTIC AND CENTRAL

- Composition of British Forces
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- Exercises and Training

Chapter 5: THE HOME DEFENCE

- Air Defence
- Maritime Defence
- Land Defence
- Specialist Readiness Forces
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Chapter 6: WESTERN DEFENCE ESTIMATES

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- Exercises and Training
- Exercises and Training

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