



MO 2/2/6

PRIME MINISTER

1983 SCRUTINY PROGRAMME

In his letter of 26th January, your Principal Private Secretary asked for contributions to the 1983 Scrutiny Programme.

2. As you know, I am introducing MINIS into the Ministry of Defence to a very urgent and tight timescale. The first, validation, round will take place from March to July and the first of the full annual rounds from August to March 1984. Setting up MINIS in a Department of this size is a major task which at present is tying up the staff who would otherwise direct our scrutiny programme. I should also prefer to look at where individual, more limited, scrutinies can most effectively be carried out when I have the results of the first MINIS round.

3. I therefore propose that the introduction of MINIS should be the centrepiece of my 1983 programme. I should be very happy to explain to you personally how we are tackling it.

4. To complement this, we are, however, also planning some scrutinies for 1983 which can be launched straightaway:

Resource Control Review

Part 2 of the review of RAF support, examining the following in detail: RAF manpower policy; policy on job specifications; training; and contracting-out 1st and 2nd line aircraft servicing.



Multi-departmental Reviews

Inspection and Review - full MOD participation

Procurement and Contract Procedures - we would propose to associate the MPO with the Management Audits we are just about to start on the whole of our Contracts organisation against the background of the Review Board's consideration of current price formulae on Government contracts, and on the REME Contract Repair Branch.

Effectiveness Reviews

We are also already fully participating with the MPO on the review of Stocktaking and will cooperate with that on Productivity Schemes.

Full details of these contributions will be provided to the MPO in the normal way.

5. I am copying this minute to the Lord Privy Seal and to John Cassels.

mya

Ministry of Defence
11th February 1983



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

26 January 1983

D/F

Dear Private Secretary

Centrally Co-ordinated Efficiency Exercises 1983:
The Scrutiny Programme

The programme of Centrally Co-ordinated Efficiency Exercises proposed in the Lord Privy Seal's minute of 26 November has been agreed by Ministers. It envisages up to 30 further departmental scrutinies and 3 multi-department reviews.

I am writing to invite proposals for the scrutiny programme. Ministers are asked to send these to the Prime Minister by 11 February and to copy them to the Lord Privy Seal and Mr. Cassels.

The target size of the scrutiny programme has again been kept small, having regard to other work in hand or in prospect. So topics should be substantial and significant in terms of the activities or policies of the department. Wherever possible they should also promote the Government's longer-term aims for improving Civil Service management. The Prime Minister will have these factors in mind when considering their suitability for inclusion in the programme.

Specific areas likely to provide strong candidates for scrutinies are:

- (1) Whether the policy processes in use provide Ministers with the right material at the right time on which to take decisions and with adequate information and methods by which to assess the cost-effectiveness of the action taken.
- (2) Large executive questions which are relatively self-contained.
- (3) Areas of work involving specialist groups (e.g. lawyers and accountants).

/ (4)

(4) The arrangement by which advice, information and help are provided to the public and outside bodies (e.g. the preparation and publication of advice - leaflets, articles, films, advice and information provided by visits).

(5) Administrative tribunals (e.g. appeals boards).

(6) The efficiency and value for money of selected Non-Departmental Public Bodies.

Ministers are invited to put forward at least one scrutiny. Those in charge of larger departments are invited to propose more than one. Each proposal should, as in previous years, contain brief information on:

(1) Subject: the policy, function or activity to be examined.

(2) Cost of the policy, function or activity, and the number of staff involved.

(3) Reasons for selecting the subject.

(4) Terms of Reference.

(5) Proposed starting and finishing dates.

(6) Names of examining officers, if known, and Ministerial reporting arrangements. (In selecting staff to conduct scrutinies Ministers are asked to bear in mind the importance of putting examining officers in charge who have the questioning mind and good judgement fundamental to the scrutiny technique).

Work on scrutinies should not start before proposals have been agreed by the Prime Minister. The programme should begin as early as possible in the year but there is no need for all scrutinies to start on a common date. Notes of Guidance for examining officers will be re-issued shortly and briefing for examining officers will be arranged subsequently.

I am copying this letter to the Private Secretaries of all Ministers in charge of Departments and to Sir Robert Armstrong, Sir Douglas Wass, John Sparrow and John Cassels. Ian Beesley (273 5226) in the Rayner Unit can provide further advice if it is required.

Yours sincerely,

Robin Butler

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