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THE PRIME MINISTER

Personal Minute

No. M.13

MINISTERS IN CHARGE OF DEPARTMENTS

We have made good progress since 1979 in reducing the number of advisory and other public bodies, and I am grateful for the efforts colleagues have put into the review arrangements.

The reviews have served us less well in delivering value for money in the bodies which remain. I therefore very much welcome the new programme of improvements in the financial management of these bodies which colleagues will be putting in hand under the general direction of the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and the Chief Secretary. We know from experience however that it is all too easy for programmes of this kind to produce little more than jargon and bureaucracy. I hope colleagues will be able to give their personal commitment to this new exercise and so ensure that their departments and the bodies concerned concentrate their efforts not on creating systems but on using them to secure real and early improvements in performance.

Margaret Thatcher

25 October, 1984

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(3)
PRIME MINISTER

M. 13.

Could you please re-sign
this minute?

The first paragraph has been slightly altered by the removal of the words "which had long since ceased to serve any useful purpose for the taxpayer". While this must undoubtedly have been true of some bodies, it might on reflection seem a bit hard on others. The substance of the argument is unaffected.

Dubs

24 October 1984

Re - PM's Personal Minute of 9 October

file

SP

OK

Ministers in Charge of
Depts.



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From the Private Secretary

7 November 1984

We have received the attached minute from a member of MOD staff. I leave it to you to judge how best to deal with but you might like to consider a gentle reminder to its originator that there are other ways of airing such views than in rather impolite minutes to the Prime Minister's office!

Tim Flesher

Desmond

→ D J Bowen, Esq.
Ministry of Defence

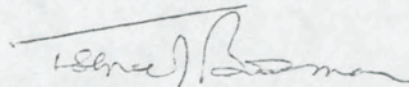
LOOSE MINUTE

6 November 1984

APS/Prime Minister

I have recently seen a copy of the Prime Minister's Personal Minute of 9 October to Ministers in charge of Departments and am surprised to see that the unauthorised disclosure of its contents should be considered to be "prejudicial to the interests of the nation." Knowledge of the minute's intent would, I suggest, be more likely to be in the nation's interest than not.

What is certain is that the handling of the minute and its copies throughout Departments, in accordance with the rules for handling classified papers, will have imposed an additional burden on the Service.



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