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From the Private Secretary

28 September 1987

*Dear Sir,*

**HOUSE OF COMMONS DEFENCE COMMITTEE  
REPORT ON IMPLEMENTING THE LESSONS OF THE  
FALKLANDS CAMPAIGN: GOVERNMENT RESPONSE**

The Prime Minister has noted the Defence Secretary's minute of 24 September covering the draft of the Government's response to the House of Commons Defence Committee Report on Implementing the Lessons of the Falklands Campaign. She is content for the response to issue, subject to the comments of other colleagues.

I am copying this letter to the Private Secretaries to members of the Cabinet and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

*Yours sincerely*  
  
C D POWELL

John Howe, Esq.,  
Ministry of Defence

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PRIME MINISTER

HOUSE OF COMMONS DEFENCE COMMITTEE REPORT ON IMPLEMENTING THE  
LESSONS OF THE FALKLANDS CAMPAIGN - GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

We owe a response to the previous Defence Committee's Fourth Report from the last Session, "Implementing the Lessons of the Falklands Campaign". The report was published on 16th July and, subject to colleagues' views, I intend to publish the attached draft response as a White Paper in the week beginning 19th October, before the Defence Debate which could be held during the following week.

2. The Committee's report, which is the culmination of an inquiry which was conducted throughout the last Parliament, is a substantial one. It offers an assessment of the lessons of the campaign, and the extent to which they have been followed up, not only as they affect the performance of equipment (which was the relatively limited scope of the inquiry as originally conceived) but also matters such as organisation, command and control, communications, logistics and training. The report is accordingly broad in the range of topics considered. At one level it endorses the retention of a UK out-of-area capability, to the extent that this is compatible with the economic and defence base; at another, for example, it expresses concern about the amount of kit troops have to carry.

3. On the whole we come out of the report fairly well and, although there is not much novel that can be said in reply to it, I believe that we can respond in generally positive terms,

Prime Minister  
This is a detailed  
response & seems  
generally uncontroversial

CDP  
25/9.



pointing to the progress which has been, and continues to be, made in implementing the lessons of the campaign. The Committee urge in a number of places that resources should be provided to protect existing defence capabilities or to fund programme enhancements on which, for obvious reasons, the response has very little encouraging to say, since we have yet to address the future defence programme in PES 87. I think, however, that the proposed White Paper should help set the tone for a constructive relationship with the new Defence Committee, even though it will be surprising if they do not persist in highlighting - as their predecessors have done in this report - the problems of matching programmes and resources.

4. To enable the White Paper to be published in time, we shall need to get the draft to the printers very shortly. I should be grateful, therefore, if colleagues would let me have any comments by 2nd October.

5. I am copying this to Cabinet colleagues and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Ministry of Defence

24 September 1987

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IMPLEMENTING THE LESSONS OF THE FALKLANDS CAMPAIGN

1 In this memorandum the Government responds to the Fourth Report from the Defence Committee, Session 1986-87. Like the inquiry which preceded it, the report is extensive in its scope and deals with a wide range of issues affecting the Ministry of Defence. The Government welcomes the constructive approach which the Committee have taken in the report and presents the following observations on it

The context (Part II)

2. The Government welcomes the Committee's endorsement of the retention of an out of area capability to protect British territory, to render assistance to friendly Governments and, in case of need, to facilitate the evacuation of British nationals.

The applicability to NATO of the lessons of the Falklands (Part III)

3. The Government agrees with the Committee's conclusions in

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this regard (paragraph 15). In particular it has noted the importance the Committee attach to readiness and training, and it welcomes the Committee's recognition of the ability, demonstrated in the campaign, of our forces to improvise and to operate under stress

Evaluating equipment performance (Part IV)

4. Collection of information (paragraphs 16-27) The Government accepts the Committee's view that the Ministry of Defence should give consideration to having operational analysis (OA) and scientific staff routinely accompanying forces in the initial stages of deployment. This objective can probably best be achieved by giving those analysts already attached to the operational Commands formal wartime appointments and supplementing them with specialist OA and scientific staff drawn, as the Committee suggest, from a "shopping list" of personnel with relevant experience and training.

5 The Government notes the Committee's view that, in a conflict, a consultant surgeon should be appointed specifically to monitor medical treatment and to assess the effect of new weapon systems on personnel. No formal monitoring was

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undertaken in the Falklands campaign, but the nature of surgical training ensures that informal monitoring is continuous and takes place at all stages in the treatment chain. The subsequent analysis of the results of treatment takes particular account of special factors, such as climate as well as new weapon systems. This analysis can lead to changes; for example, the Falklands campaign revealed the need to change the contents of the maxillo-facial field kit and this has subsequently been done. However, a consultant surgeon appointed specifically for tasks such as those identified by the Committee would only be able to monitor at one place at any time, and would arguably be better employed as an operating surgeon.

6. The Government agrees with the Committee's analysis of the specific problems of obtaining useful intelligence on weapons performance from prisoner interrogation. Were OA and scientific staff to be deployed in the manner suggested by the Committee (paragraph 4 above) they might be able to draw up guidance relevant to their concerns for the interrogation of enemy prisoners of war, and in appropriate circumstances might be made available for discussions with the interrogators.

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7. Language and interrogation skills (paragraphs 28-29) The Government agrees with the Committee's assessment of the value of language training in the armed forces and of the potential benefits that interrogation skills can offer in war, and notes the Committee's suggestion for securing the more efficient use of these valuable resources.

Sea Systems (Part V)

8. Introduction (paragraphs 34-35) The Government welcomes and endorses the Committee's tribute to the Royal Navy.

9. Design and financial constraints (paragraphs 37-38) The Government agrees with the Committee that design is fundamental to ship performance, and also recognises the need for timely decisions on future ship orders. On current plans the INVINCIBLE-class carriers (CVSAs) are expected to run on well into the next century. Studies of how best to deploy aircraft afloat after about 2010 are already in hand.

10. The Government welcomes the Committee's endorsement of the decision to retain an amphibious capability in the longer term. The present programme should ensure the replacement or refurbishment of HMS INTREPID and HMS FEARLESS by the mid-1990s when they reach the end of their current lives.

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11. The destroyer and frigate fleet (paragraphs 39-43) The Government notes the Committee's concern over future frigate orders. The Government remains committed to a modern, well-balanced and capable surface escort force of about 50 frigates and destroyers, but the number of frigates to be ordered in any one year will continue to depend upon the resources available as well as on other factors such as hull life. The benchmark of about three frigate orders a year was devised in 1982 and was based on judgements made at that time concerning factors such as hull life, maintenance support and maintenance cycles. Some of these considerations have since changed, leading to decisions to extend ships' lives and modify upkeep cycles with the result that it is not now necessary to order three frigates a year in order to maintain a surface fleet of about 50 destroyers and frigates. [The Committee will have noted that tenders for up to four more Type 23 frigates have recently been sought with the aim of placing orders in 1988.]

12. The Government also notes the Committee's concern about the relationship between Royal Navy manpower numbers and seagoing commitments. Reductions in the uniformed strength of the Royal Navy since 1981, coupled with a paring back of the support area, have led to some pressure on manpower. The gradual replacement of older, more manpower intensive ships

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should help relieve this. In the meantime, measures to improve retention while maintaining Fleet effectiveness are under consideration.

13. The Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) (paragraphs 45-50) The Government endorses the Committee's recognition of the vital role played by the RFA during the Falklands campaign. The importance of the RFA is unlikely to diminish.

14. The introduction of the Auxiliary Oiler Replenishment (AOR) vessel into the Fleet will provide a significant improvement in the capability of the RFA. It remains the Government's aim to change the status of the RFA; this is a complex subject, and work is continuing to resolve details.

15. The Government recognises the importance of proper provision of pension and welfare arrangements for RFA crew members. Following the campaign a study was commissioned into financial arrangements for Ministry of Defence civilians during emergencies, which embraced arrangements for RFA crew casualties and their families. It concluded that the effect of the interlocking provisions of the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme, National Maritime Board agreements and national insurance benefits was ".....to raise the compensation payable

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in respect of RFA personnel killed or injured..... above that in respect of other civilians to broadly the level payable in respect of members of the Armed Forces of roughly equivalent rank". Welfare arrangements during the conflict were handled by RFA Headquarters and the welfare branch of MOD's Civilian Management department, who ensured that all reports of casualties were passed on to the next of kin quickly and that positive follow-up action was provided.

16. Ship design (paragraphs 51-54) The Government notes the comments of the Committee and will take them into account when considering the eventual report of the independent inquiry which is being conducted under the chairmanship of Mr H R MacLeod of Lloyds Register of Shipping.

17. Structural performance of HM Ships (paragraphs 55-64) The Government notes the concern expressed by the Committee at the use of the aluminium in warships. There has been no significant use of aluminium structure in warships since the late 1950s. The Type 21 is an exception to this. The Government welcomes the Committee's acknowledgement that it would not be cost effective to replace the superstructure of this class of vessel. Work continues to remove aluminium from other vessels currently in service, where it is mainly present

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in ladders and walkways. Replacement of the aluminium superstructure of the four older Landing Ships Logistic (SIR BEDIVERE, SIR GERAINT, SIR LANCELOT and SIR PERCIVALE) is being considered as part of the Ship Life Extension Programme they are scheduled to undergo.

18. Stability and ballasting (paragraphs 65-68) The Government notes the Committee's comments on ballasting. Where ballasting is necessary because of additions to the equipment fitted in ships during service, permanent solid ballast is usually the ideal. Where ballasting is required because consumables such as fuel have been expended, liquid ballast has advantages. Each ship must be considered separately taking into account its particular circumstances.

19. Propulsion (paragraphs 69-75) The Government endorses the Committee's conclusion that the propulsion systems in use in the Task Force during the campaign performed extremely well.

20. Fire and battle damage control (paragraphs 76-83) The Government entirely agrees with the Committee that a ship's design should minimise the risks of a fire starting and spreading, and that its company should be trained and equipped to survive and fight fires and other damage. The Government's

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White Paper Cmnd 8758, "The Falklands Campaign: The Lessons", acknowledged that some important lessons had been learned during the campaign about the spread of fire and smoke in ships and about the use of materials which could prove hazardous in fires, and noted that a number of remedial measures had been put in hand. These have included not only physical measures, but also organisational changes involving the formation of a Vulnerability Policy Committee in the Ministry of Defence to advise on the difficult problems of priorities in the survivability of warships.

21. Cabling (paragraphs 84-85) The Government welcomes the Committee's conclusion that the deficiencies in cabling which became apparent during the campaign were not as significant as had been suggested in some quarters. Fire retardation has always been one of the factors taken into account when the cost effectiveness of cables for use in the Royal Navy has been assessed. Limited fire hazard cable is now specified for all new ships.

22. Accommodation standards (paragraphs 89-92) The Government notes the concern expressed by the Committee about the presence of combustible materials in HM Ships. Accommodation spaces will always contain combustible material,

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but all materials used have always been evaluated with respect to their potential as a fire hazard, as well as other factors such as cost. Since the campaign the use of unbacked melamine paper laminate has stopped; this material is being replaced, as the Committee note, with a non-shatterable sandwich of melamine and aluminium. Quick release linings are being used as much as possible. The Government welcomes the Committee's recognition that adequate corrective action has been taken in this area.

23. The Government recognises the Committee's concern about the widespread use of foam mattresses before the Falklands campaign. Interior sprung mattresses of the required thickness and with flame retardant covering were not developed until late 1981. They had been issued to all major warships by August 1983.

24. The Government notes the Committee's observation that reduced habitability standards may result from measures to improve safety on board ships, and that this could have adverse effects on morale. At present seagoers receive an additional form of pay, known as Hard Lying Money, where living conditions fall below a defined standard. The effect on living standards of lesser usage of combustible material, and the Committee's

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comments, will be drawn to the attention of the Armed Forces Pay Review Body in the context of a review of seagoing remuneration which is to form part of the 1988 pay review.

25. Ship zoning (paragraphs 93-96) The Government notes the Committee's views on ship zoning, but does not accept the suggestion that rules for merchant ships drafted in the context of peacetime accidents can be directly applied to the circumstances facing much more complex warships in battle. However, it welcomes the Committee's conclusion that the Ministry of Defence is tackling the problems in this area vigorously. The Type 23 incorporates all the zoning lessons of the Falklands, including those relating to smoke removal.

26. Fire-fighting equipment (paragraphs 97-103) The Government recognises the concern expressed by the Committee about fire fighting equipment and training and welcomes the Committee's acknowledgement that the Ministry of Defence has taken appropriate action. The Falklands campaign served to heighten awareness of damage control and firefighting throughout the Royal Navy and has resulted in improved standards of knowledge and training, as well as increased

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scales of equipment such as fire pumps, breathing apparatus and personal breathing sets.

27. Firefighting (paragraph 105) The Government notes the Committee's views on the importance of fire prevention and damage control. Relevant measures will be given full consideration in the development of Staff Requirements for future ships. The Government agrees with the Committee that the successful fighting of the fire on board HMS ILLUSTRIOUS in 1986 was a heartening example of the lessons of the Falklands campaign being implemented.

28. Air defence (paragraphs 107-113) As Cmnd 8758 acknowledged, and the Committee's report notes, the air defence of the Task Force was made more difficult by the lack of Airborne Early Warning (AEW) and the absence of land-based all-weather fighters. Such difficulties are less likely to arise in the NATO area, and the Government notes the Committee's welcome for the order for six Boeing E-3 AEW aircraft. Nonetheless, the campaign taught several lessons relevant to air defence.

29. AEW (paragraphs 114-120) The Government shares the Committee's view that the Sea King/Searchwater radar combination which is embarked in the operational CVSAs is

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working well; this system is expected to remain in service for some time to come.

30. Sea Dart (paragraphs 122-124) The Government agrees with the Committee that Sea Dart is a very capable missile system in the role for which it is designed. Further improvements to its capability are in hand.

31. Sea Wolf (paragraphs 126-129) The Government endorses the Committee's view that the Sea Wolf represents an effective and flexible way of meeting a major threat. Current plans are for the vertical launch version of this system to be fitted to the Type 23 frigate and the AOR. However, the Batch 1 Type 22s will not now be fitted with the 911 tracker, and it seems unlikely that we will now proceed with the procurement of containerised systems for emergency use.

32. Close in weapon systems (CIWS) (paragraphs 130-136) The Government notes the Committee's view that progress in implementing the provision of CIWS has been slow. All three CVSAs are now fitted with CIWS and the Batch III Type 22s are being fitted with the Goalkeeper CIWS on build. Fitting to other vessels which are to receive CIWS must await both delivery of the systems and ship-fitting opportunities.

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Extensive structural work is involved. All Type 42 destroyers will be fitted with Phalanx over the next two to three years as refit opportunities arise.

33. Passive defence (paragraph 139) The Government notes the Committee's comments concerning passive defences. Consideration is being given to the possibility of stockpiling refurbished chaff launchers for use as required for RFAs and ships taken up from trade.

34. Anti-submarine warfare (ASW) (paragraphs 151-159) The Government agrees with the Committee on the fundamental importance of an ASW capability to the Royal Navy. The ASW assets and equipment deployed with the Task Force performed well, in particular demonstrating an ability to sustain ASW operations over a lengthy period.

35. Further improvements to our ASW capability have been made subsequently. Towed array sonars are already at sea with the Fleet. In addition to the advantages inherent in these sensors being remote from the parent ship, their greater acoustic apertures allow targets at greater ranges to be detected. Some 30 Sonar Environment Prediction and Display Systems (SEPADS) have been bought for fitting to all towed array frigates, to the three CVSAs and to some RFAs, and for mobile support of helicopter operations.

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36. The Government agrees with the Committee that the future introduction into service of the UPHOLDER class of diesel-electric submarines and the ASW version of the EH101 helicopter will further significantly improve our ASW capability.

37. Anti surface warfare (paragraphs 160-166) The Government notes the Committee's comments on torpedoes for the Royal Navy. The Mod 2 version of the Tigerfish heavyweight torpedo is now entering service. It has much improved reliability and a better anti-surface ship capability.

38. Naval gunfire (paragraphs 167-168) The Government welcomes the Committee's endorsement of the decision to mount the 4.5 inch Mk 8 gun on the Type 23 and the Batch III Type 22 frigates.

39. Merchant shipping (paragraphs 169-176) The Government agrees with the Committee that without the support of merchant vessels the campaign could not have been mounted. The Merchant Navy played a vital role. The use of merchant vessels for military purposes in an emergency has long been an essential part of defence planning. It would be uneconomic for the Royal Navy in peacetime to acquire all the vessels that might be needed in war.

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40. The Government also recognises the need noted by the Committee for good liaison between the Merchant and Royal Navies, and a number of measures have been taken to this end. These include continuing the arrangements whereby about 350 Royal Navy and Royal Naval Reserve officers a year sail in merchant ships on liaison and acquaintanceship voyages; nearly 40 places a year on Royal Navy courses are made available to Merchant Navy officers; and liaison meetings between the Royal and Merchant Navies are held twice yearly in the Ministry of Defence. In addition merchant ships participate in major NATO exercises at sea.

41. Defence of merchant shipping (paragraphs 177-181) The Government acknowledges the Committee's view that the idea of converting merchant ships for use in support of amphibious operations or as RFA vessels deserves close attention. The Ministry of Defence is well aware of the advantages of such concepts and will continue to take them into account, although factors such as emitted noise levels and survivability must also be considered.

42. The Government notes the Committee's views on the provision of defensive equipment for ships taken up from trade. This is under consideration.

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Land systems (Part VI)

43. Personal kit (paragraphs 186-190) The Government notes the Committee's view that there should be a regular review of load-carrying equipment. Regular reviews of load carriage requirements are already carried out. Loading lists are then drawn up which take account of both physiological capability and equipment carrying capacity. The Government recognises that the current standard issue 58 pattern webbing is in need of replacement. Plans exist to introduce into service a new personal load carrying equipment (PLCE) which has been very favourably received by troops during the course of extensive trials and will greatly improve load carrying performance.

44. The Government agrees with the Committee that the realism of training and the length of exercises need to be kept under review, and confirms that this will continue to be done.

45. Mobility (paragraphs 191-192) Work to improve further the cross country performance of CVR(T) vehicles, centring on improvements to the running gear, is in hand. The Observer's Thermal Imaging System (OTIS) is currently being introduced into service on the CVR(T) and will result in a significant improvement in surveillance and target acquisition.

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46. The Government endorses the Committee's favourable comments on the BV202 and the Combat Engineer Tractor. The former is now being replaced by the Haglund BV206 which offers even higher standards of cross country performance and load/troop carrying capacity. This is of particular benefit to the British battalion in the ACE Mobile Force.

47. Small arms (paragraphs 194-196) The Government notes the Committee's comments on the choice of 5.56mm ammunition. The SA80 weapon system is being introduced, and the Government is satisfied with the performance of the round for the SA80 in terms of its accuracy and "stopping power" compared with the 7.62mm round. An order for the second tranche of SA80, totalling 150,000 weapons, was announced on 13 August 1987.

48. The Government agrees with the Committee on the need for thermal imaging (TI) equipment for the infantry and has initiated a programme to increase significantly the Army's capability in this regard. This includes the provision of TI sights for the MILAN anti tank weapon and of TI systems for mortar fire controllers and reconnaissance platoons. Issues will be complete by the end of the decade. Battalions will also be issued with new image intensifying sights, known as the common weapon sight, for use with SA80. These offer a

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significant improvement in performance over existing equipment, some of which will be retained in service. Finally, the issue to battalions of the new general purpose night vision goggles has recently been completed.

49. Mortars and anti-armour weapons (paragraphs 197-198) The Government notes the Committee's comments on the need for an infantry area attack weapon. The requirement for an infantry assault weapon and the priority to be attached to it in the future programme is being kept under review.

50. The Government endorses the Committee's comments on the benefits of the Raschen Bag, a pool of which has been established to allow issue to units whose deployment may require it. The possibility of modifications to the 81mm mortar base plate is kept under consideration as a possible longer term solution to the problem described by the Committee.

51. Artillery (paragraph 199) The Government notes the Committee's comments about fire support for the infantry. Within the infantry, the introduction of two light support weapons to replace one light General Purpose Machine Gun (GPMG) in rifle sections has enhanced firepower. An appropriate

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scaling of the GPMG has been retained to provide battalions with sustained fire support.

52. For out of area deployments the 105mm light gun, which was so effective in the Falklands campaign, together with the 81mm mortar, are considered to be the best means of meeting the infantry's needs for indirect fire support. In addition the introduction of the new 51mm mortar to the infantry platoon has improved its indirect fire capability.

53. The importance of training infantry to call for fire is recognised by the provision of courses. In addition, the introduction of the mortar fire data calculator, laser range finders and thermal imaging binoculars for mortar fire controllers will reduce error and increase visibility in poor weather.

54. Air Defence: Rapier (paragraphs 202-207) The Government notes the Committee's concern about the Rapier generator. Trials are being held on two possible solutions involving an improved version of the existing generator and a new diesel model.

55. Conclusions (paragraphs 208-211) The Government notes

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the Committee's concern about the possibility of economies at the margins of the programme affecting requirements whose significance was highlighted by the campaign. Full account is taken, and will continue to be taken, of the lessons of the campaign in determining relative priorities in forward plans.

Air systems (Part VII)

56. Harrier (paragraphs 217-224) The Government endorses the Committee's commendation of the performance of the Sea Harrier and the Harrier GR3 in the Falklands campaign. Contrary to what is suggested in paragraph 217 of the report, the Sea Harrier possesses superior sub-sonic acceleration to the Argentine aircraft, of which only the Mirage was significantly faster. The Sea Harrier's main armament, the Sidewinder AIM9L, also performed extremely well.

57. The Government notes the Committee's welcome for the measures taken to upgrade the Sea Harrier. The currently planned mid-life update will give the Sea Harrier a beyond visual range multi-target capability, enabling the aircraft to perform as a very effective interceptor.

58. The Government notes the Committee's views regarding the

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provision of a third Carrier Air Group (CAG). Cmnd 8758 announced that two of the INVINCIBLE class carriers would be available for deployment at short notice and that, to ensure this, a third carrier would be maintained in refit or reserve. The corollary of this is that two CAGs also need to be available at short notice and this requirement is met.

59. The Government agrees with the Committee's assessment of the Harrier GR5 as a considerable advance over the GR3, and confirms that this aircraft will be given a night attack capability. Night attack capable GR5s will be re-designated GR7.

60. The Committee's interest in the development of future supersonic VSTOL aircraft is shared by the Government. The Ministry of Defence is participating in studies with the United States into a future Advanced Short Take off and Vertical Landing (ASTOVL) aircraft.

61. Nimrod (paragraph 225) The Government welcomes the Committee's acknowledgement of the recent improvements to the Nimrod Maritime Patrol Aircraft, and notes their views on the desirability of this aircraft being equipped with a short range

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air-to-air missile. The Nimrod MR2 fleet is currently undergoing a modification programme, which will be completed by the end of 1988, to enable it to fire the Sidewinder missile. However, the fitting of the weapon imposes weight and drag penalties, thus limiting patrol time, and the expected level of the air threat in the NATO theatre would not always justify carrying it. The aircraft is also being fitted with chaff and IR flare dispensers for additional self-protection.

62. Helicopters (paragraphs 227-236) The Government notes the Committee's concern that the large number of hours flown by helicopters in the South Atlantic should be recognised by the replacement of helicopters whose operational lives have been reduced as a result. The helicopters used in the campaign were examined after the conflict and thoroughly overhauled where necessary. Some Royal Navy Sea King and Army Gazelle helicopters had been flown at weights in excess of their authorised Maximum All Up Mass (MAUM), and as a precaution those components which could have been over-stressed were serviced or replaced. None of the helicopters were considered to have had their operational lives reduced, though plans for running-on the Scout have taken into account attrition and increased flying rates experienced in the Falklands campaign.

63. The Government notes the Committee's concern about the

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vulnerability of battlefield helicopters. As a result of experience during the Falklands campaign, Gazelle signature reduction studies were set in train. These have now been completed and a number of measures are being implemented to reduce vulnerability.

64. The Government notes the Committee's continued interest in the procurement of, and Service responsibility for, support helicopters. The orders for 25 EH101 and 16 Lynx mentioned in the report followed the recent study into future support helicopter requirements, which concluded that our requirement was for a helicopter in the 10-14 tonne class. The Government welcomes the Committee's appreciation of the advantage of procuring EH101 for the support helicopter role in the Central Region as well as for the Navy and its acceptance of the logic of withdrawal from the NH90 project.

65. The Government notes the Committee's views on responsibility for the acquisition, management and tasking of support helicopters. The Government remains of the view, however, that the establishment of the military requirement for and subsequent acquisition of helicopters should remain the responsibility of the Defence Staff, in conjunction with the Office of Management and Budget, and of the Procurement

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Executive respectively. The Army is fully represented in both mechanisms, which are those used for the acquisition of all items of equipment.

66. As for the management and tasking of support helicopters, we have in hand two sets of studies, on the responsibility for, and management of, support helicopters and the command and control of the support helicopter force in Central Europe. The Committee will be informed of the conclusions of both studies in due course. Meanwhile, the tasking of support helicopters allocated to the Army in transition to war and war is already entirely under Army control, and the Army decides the priorities for peacetime tasking and training within the hours that can be made available.

67. Pilot training (paragraphs 237-241) The Government notes the Committee's concern that the training of aircrew might be adversely affected by cuts made in flying hours for short term savings. Restrictions on flying hours are only imposed after careful consideration; and very high priority is given to restoring the effects of such cuts should the financial position allow. Indeed, in this financial year, provision has been made for a high level of flying training activity, well in excess of NATO minimum criteria. In any event, great care is taken to ensure that required standards of flight safety and proficiency are maintained.

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Electronic Warfare (Part VIII)

68. Radar performance (paragraphs 249-254) The Government notes the Committee's views on the importance of continued progress in updating ship-borne radar, and the need for such radars to be able to operate effectively close to land.

69. The Government agrees with the Committee's comments on the limitations of the ZB298 radar, which is an old heavy equipment with a high power consumption. The order for its successor, known as MSTAR, was announced in April 1987. MSTAR is very much lighter than ZB298, will require significantly less power and will employ standard rechargeable nickel cadmium batteries; these are compatible with those used in the Clansman range of radios, and this will ensure greater availability of replacements on the battlefield. The Ministry of Defence continues to search for ways of achieving more power output for less weight from batteries.

70. The Government notes the Committee's comments on the Sea Harrier radar, Blue Fox, and is aware of its shortcomings. Early indications from trials are that Blue Vixen, due to be fitted to the Sea Harrier as part of its mid-life update, will achieve the look-down shoot-down capability not available in Blue Fox.

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71. Electronic Support Measures (ESM) (paragraphs 255-258)

The Government notes the Committee's observations on ESM equipment, particularly as regards the need for adequate sealing on the airframe and for rigorous testing of equipment in realistic conditions.

72. Identification, Friend or Foe (IFF) (paragraphs 259-261)

The Government welcomes the Committee's recognition of the vital part which IFF will have to play in any future European conflict and notes its views on the planned NATO Identification System (NIS), the adoption of which will do much to improve the position.

73. The Government has long been aware of the need for a database for the recognition of both friendly and hostile emitters. In 1981 the Ministry of Defence set up the Electronic Warfare Operational Support Establishment (EWOSE), whose task is to maintain a database library of friendly and hostile sea, air and land systems.

74. Conclusions (paragraph 264) The Government does not accept the Committee's implication that there has been "total inactivity" in the field of EW. The speed of technological advance in this area makes it difficult to remain fully abreast of all developments. However, this has not prevented work on a

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number of projects designed to meet the needs of Britain's roles in NATO and elsewhere, including projects arising from the lessons of the campaign.

Command, Control, Communications and Intelligence (C3I) (Part IX)

75. The Government is unable to accept the Committee's view that there is a tendency for investment in C3I to be accorded a low priority. The roles of platforms, weapons and related C3I systems are complementary to a degree which makes it essential to maintain a due balance among the three. While it is true that resources have to be allocated according to relative priorities, this does not mean that C3I is regarded as the poor relation.

76. Command and Control (paragraphs 266-274) The Government welcomes the Committee's favourable comments on the present arrangements for the command and control of out-of-area operations, including principally the 2-star Joint Force Headquarters.

77. Strategic Communications (paragraphs 275-282) The Government notes the Committee's support for the decision to initiate a new military satellite communications programme and

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to extend the installation of Satellite Communications Terminals (SCOT) in major warships. Signals capacity will be further improved with the introduction of the Distributed Message Processing System (DIMPS), which will allow data rates to be significantly increased.

78. The Government endorses the Committee's comments on the need for commanders in the field not to be overburdened with demands for instant information. As the Committee observes, it has not been suggested that this was a problem encountered by operational commanders in the Falklands campaign; nevertheless, the point is noted.

79. The Government welcomes the Committee's satisfaction with the way in which the Ministry of Defence has absorbed the lessons relating to the handling of press and public information.

80. Tactical communications (paragraphs 282-290) The Government agrees generally with the Committee's analysis of the problems associated with tactical communications and ships taken up from trade (STUFT). Clearly it will never be possible to eliminate all difficulties in this area. However, the Royal Navy is fully aware of the importance of STUFT

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shipping and the desirability of reducing the type of problems mentioned by the Committee to a minimum. There are continuing close contacts between the Royal and Merchant Navies, as indicated in paragraph 40. In addition regular exercises are held each year involving the taking up of ships from trade (for instance, as in the recent exercise Ocean Safari) and communications exercises are held annually between the Royal and Merchant Navies. There are also plans to put Naval parties aboard many of the merchant ships to be taken up for defence purposes in an emergency, and some of these parties would include communications specialists.

81. The Government notes the Committee's reference to the procurement of secure tactical communications equipment for ground forces. The Staff Target concerning a long term solution is under consideration. In the shorter term a tactical data encryption device with out-of-area applications is to be provided.

82. The Government recognises that the campaign highlighted shortcomings in RAF tactical communications equipment. These are to be remedied by the provision of tactical satellite communications equipment and by the replacement of HF long-haul tactical communications equipment with improved and more

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transportable HF systems. Cryptographic equipment is being procured to enable these systems to provide secure tactical communications.

83. The Government acknowledges the need to make improvements to the communications systems for both fixed and rotary wing aircraft and such improvements are planned to be undertaken during the next few years.

84. Aerial reconnaissance (paragraph 292) We plan to form two Tornado GR1 reconnaissance squadrons, one in RAF(Germany), the other in the United Kingdom. Both squadrons are planned to have formed by very early in the 1990s.

Logistics (Part X)

85. Organisation and training (paragraphs 298-307) The Government shares the Committee's views on the importance of Joint Warfare (JW) training. In the light of experience in the campaign significant improvements have been made in this area. The Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff (Commitments) has been given overall responsibility for JW training. Under his direction a Joint Warfare Committee, which sets the policy for JW training, was formed in June 1985. A new post of Director

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Joint Warfare (DJW) was established in October 1986 as the focal point in MOD for JW matters, and the Commandant Joint Warfare Staff now reports direct to the DJW. The present arrangements for JW training are being reviewed to determine whether they provide the required levels of JW expertise.

86. The Government agrees that there are arguments in favour of mixed logistic units, particularly in operations of the scale and nature of the Falklands campaign, and has considered applying the concept more widely. It has been concluded, however, that its introduction would not improve the quality of logistic support in Central Europe. Operational flexibility would be reduced and Brigade Commanders operating within 1(BR)Corps as primary force commanders would be burdened with excessive responsibility for logistic support. It is considered that this responsibility should remain at Divisional level, an arrangement which offers administrative as well as cost benefits in peacetime.

87. Rates of usage (paragraphs 308-313) The Government confirms that the BAS and RARS revision will take note of the ammunition usage rates experienced during Operation Corporate. However, the revision is essentially concerned with the Central Region and the flanks and is being conducted on the basis of

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assumptions of the likely intensity and duration of operations in these areas.

88. The Dockyards (paragraph 315) The Government agrees with the Committee that there has been a reduction in UK ship repair capacity since the campaign. However, it was the problem of substantial overcapacity which led to the decisions to close Chatham Dockyard and to dispose of Gibraltar Dockyard, and there remains considerable overcapacity in the UK ship repair industry in both the public and private sectors. The continuing reductions in the Royal Dockyard workforce are a consequence not only of this overcapacity but also of improvements in efficiency and changes in warship design and technology. Modern warships are better designed than their predecessors and therefore need fewer and shorter maintenance periods, and as a result reductions in ship repair capacity do not necessarily imply a reduction in the level of support that dockyards can provide in an emergency.

89. The introduction of commercial management into the Royal Dockyards derived from the Government's determination to improve efficiency and value for money in Naval ship repair, the need for which had been widely recognised. The Government therefore welcomes the Committee's recognition that under the

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new management arrangements there will be a readiness to respond appropriately in time of national emergency.

90. Stowage (paragraphs 317) The Government acknowledges that in operational conditions it may sometimes be necessary to set aside peacetime loading regulations. Movements staff should always seek to obtain formal exemption in such circumstances, but there may be occasions when the urgency of the operation makes this impossible. Any infraction of the regulations in the loading of a merchant vessel would in theory render the master liable to prosecution, although the decision of whether or not to prosecute would of course be for the Government to make. It would not be possible to indemnify a master for such infractions, as the Committee suggests, since indemnities operate only in civil law. The Government is considering the problem and will inform the Committee of the outcome.

91. Casualty handling (paragraph 318-324) The Government agrees with the Committee's analysis and confirms that the lessons which emerged are being implemented. The Aid to Save campaign is now in operation and 23 Parachute Field Ambulance has been reformed.

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Procurement (Part XI)

92. The procurement process (paragraphs 325-330) The Government notes the Committee's desire to see introduced into the normal peacetime procurement process some of the streamlined procedures used during the Falklands campaign. The Ministry of Defence is firmly committed to continuing to increase the efficiency of its procurement and aims to streamline procedures wherever this can be done consistently with the need to work within the normal budgetary and cash limit arrangements; the achievement of value for money; and the requirements of Parliamentary accountability.

93. The Ministry has sought the views of industry and has taken account of these in the changes which have been introduced since the appointment of Mr Peter Levene as Chief of Defence Procurement. These changes are aimed at creating a competitive environment in which companies have scope for making innovative proposals which offer good value for money and in which they have strong incentives to deliver equipment or services to specification, to time and to cost. It is the Government's policy to free industry from unnecessary interferences, and changes have been introduced to give the necessary freedom within a taut contractual regime which promotes efficiency.

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94. Domestic supply versus overseas purchase (paragraphs 331-336) The Government notes the Committee's views on domestic supply versus overseas purchases, especially its balancing of the advantages of independent and/or collaborative supply against the costs that may be incurred in securing it. The Government's general policy on this matter was stated by the Prime Minister on 13 January 1986:

"Our policy is to secure the best long term value for money on a national basis in procuring the equipment which the armed forces need for their tasks. Accordingly we buy British whenever it is sensible, economic and consistent with our international obligations to do so, and acquire from overseas only when the advantages of cost, performance and timescale outweigh the longer term benefits of procuring the British alternative. The criteria used in deciding the source of our requirements are set out in the 1983 open government document "Value for Money in Defence Procurement)." (1)

95. The Committee refers to research and development; the Government's policy was stated in the 1987 Statement on the Defence Estimates as follows:

"The Defence Research and Development Base

521. The roles and capabilities that we require our

(1) Official Report Col 517

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armed forces to have are many and various - more so than those of any of our NATO allies, other than the United States. It is not surprising, therefore, that expenditure on R&D has consistently been a significant element within the defence programme to ensure that in future, as at present, the Services have equipment relevant to, and adequate for, the tasks they must be ready to discharge should circumstances so require.

522. This background to the high proportion of total Government R&D arising on defence account is not always understood; but the Government shares the underlying concern of those who fear that necessary investment in defence R&D may crowd out valuable investment in the civil sector. Thus, while defence R&D has contributed to the advance of technology, Britain's resources of qualified scientists and engineers, and the skilled manpower supporting them, are not inexhaustible. Although there is much that we can do and are doing, as described above, to harness our defence R&D effort to benefit the wider civil economy, defence and civil work are in competition for the same skills, and it would be regrettable if defence work became such an irresistible magnet for the manpower available that industry's ability to compete in the international market for civil high technology products became seriously impaired.

523. Accordingly, we shall in future be paying careful attention to this factor in making our procurement choices, giving special emphasis to avoiding duplication of successful equipment developments already achieved by our allies. Our policies of increasing competition in procurement, and encouraging greater international collaboration to meet the equipment needs of the Alliance, are already aimed at ensuring more effective use of Britain's R&D resources. We shall also be encouraging our suppliers to think more broadly about the relationship between their defence and civil markets, and we shall be very willing to join them in identifying any changes in our defence procurement processes, consistent with defence requirements and the achievement of value for money in the latter as well as the former." (2)

(2) Cmnd 101-I, paragraphs 521-3

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Conclusion (Part XII)

96. The Government welcomes the Committee's approbation of the way in which the Ministry of Defence has absorbed the lessons of the Falklands campaign. The evidence which the Ministry of Defence gave to the Committee in the course of their inquiry demonstrated the extent of the progress which had been made in implementing those lessons, and the present observations confirm that there has been no lessening in the momentum behind the implementation process.

97. The Committee properly draws attention to the context of available resources. The context today is described in the 1987 Statement on the Defence Estimates (3). But it is perhaps too easy now to overlook the scale of the real growth achieved in the years from 1978-79 to 1985-86 and the benefits which this continues to provide.

98. Of course, financial resources are only part of the context. Throughout their report the Committee pay tribute to the achievements of the men of the Task Force and of all those who contributed to its success. The principal lesson of the Falklands campaign is that the nation's most priceless defence asset is the dedication and skill of the members of the Armed Forces. That holds true today, no less than it did in 1982.

(3) Cmnd 101-I, paragraph 603