



No reply necessary
-CDP has discussed
this with Sir Clive.

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

10 December 1985

Dear Clive,

ROYAL COLLEGE OF DEFENCE STUDIES

The Prime Minister paid a visit yesterday to the Royal College of Defence Studies where she gave a short talk, fielded questions and subsequently lunched with senior members of the directing staff and of the current course.

The Prime Minister remarked afterwards that she was very unimpressed with the College. She thought the atmosphere bland and complacent, the tempo of work lethargic, the approach of the directing staff excessively general (no pun intended), all capped by a smug and self-congratulatory attitude about the virtues of the institution which she found irritating. She came away feeling that it was not serving a useful function and that the case for continuing it in its present form needed to be examined critically.

These are stern words based on a single brief visit. Before deciding what further action she might call for, it would be helpful if you would let the Prime Minister know:

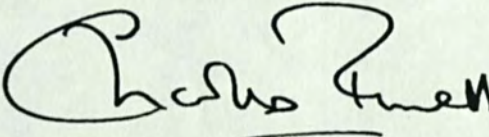
- 311
- a) when the role and performance of the RCDS were last examined;
 - b) whether any further such examination is in hand at the moment;
 - c) what alternatives to the current organisation and nature of the College have been considered in the past;

and

d) in the light of answers to a) - c) above how you think any re-assessment of the College's role might most effectively be undertaken.

It would be helpful if, for the time being at least, this exercise could be restricted to a very limited circle.

I am copying this letter on the same strictly personal basis to Antony Acland.

Yours sincerely,

(C.D. POWELL)

Sir Clive Whitmore, K.C.B., C.V.O.

GENERAL SIR MICHAEL GOW GCB

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Commandant

The Right Hon Margaret Thatcher MP
10 Downing Street
Whitehall
LONDON
SW1

Prime Minister

I have held out no
hope of ~~a return of~~
a return engagement:
and sought Clive

10 December 1985

Whitmore's comment
on the future of the
college. CDP 14/12

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My Sea Prime Minister

It was a privilege for me to welcome you to Seaford House on your first visit to this College and I am so grateful to you for finding the time in your busy programme to address us. This College is unique in its influence in Service and Government circles the world over and it is so important to send our Members home after their year-long course with a clear view of Britain and her potential.

If I may say so, Prime Minister, no-one is more able to give that message than you; and no-one in this College, particularly from overseas, is in any doubt as to whose hand is on the tiller and what course you are steering. Your talk was an example of clarity and your determination and verve, yet lightness of touch under the burden of your great office, was admired by us all. We appreciated, too, the forthright way in which you handled the discussion period which, alas for us, was all too brief. I know, however, that Members enjoyed the opportunity of meeting you less formally before and during lunch.

Your visit here was important to us and the impact you had on our overseas Members was considerable and valuable. I am indebted to you and I hope you enjoyed your visit as much as we did. I hope that you will consider returning to Seaford House to address a subsequent course when your programme allows.

For Sir

Richard Fox

