

# ESSENTIAL SERVICE ROUTES

**RESTRICTED**

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29 November 1971

The Clerk of the Council  
Chief Officer of Police

DEAR SIR

HOME OFFICE CIRCULAR NO. 239/1971  
CIVIL DEFENCE CIRCULAR NO. 4/1971  
Essential Service Routes

I attach for your information a map of essential service routes (Appendix A) which shows the network of essential service routes in England and Wales. The map shows the network of essential service routes in England and Wales with roads in the main communication routes in the Greater London area (Appendix B) in greater detail. It is distributed to local authorities and police forces in London region and contiguous sub-regions.

2. Essential service routes would be established by the adoption of measures, assisted by the Home Office, to meet the requirements of the Home Office and subsequently to meet the likely post-war requirements should the need arise. The network envisaged should be a defence system and links each region with neighbouring regions. The routes should be as far as possible, but suitable ring routes on the outer perimeters of main cities have been included.

3. With the need to limit the number of essential service routes it has not proved possible to provide for the more detailed requirements of departments and local authorities. Roads giving access between the designated essential service routes and the various terminal points in departmental and local service areas and plans are not included. In the event, if control measures are to be exercised over a particular stretch of road not designated as an essential service route, it would be for the essential service user then to seek local police assistance.

4. The network of essential service routes will be reviewed in 1973 to take account of road development schemes and motorway construction.

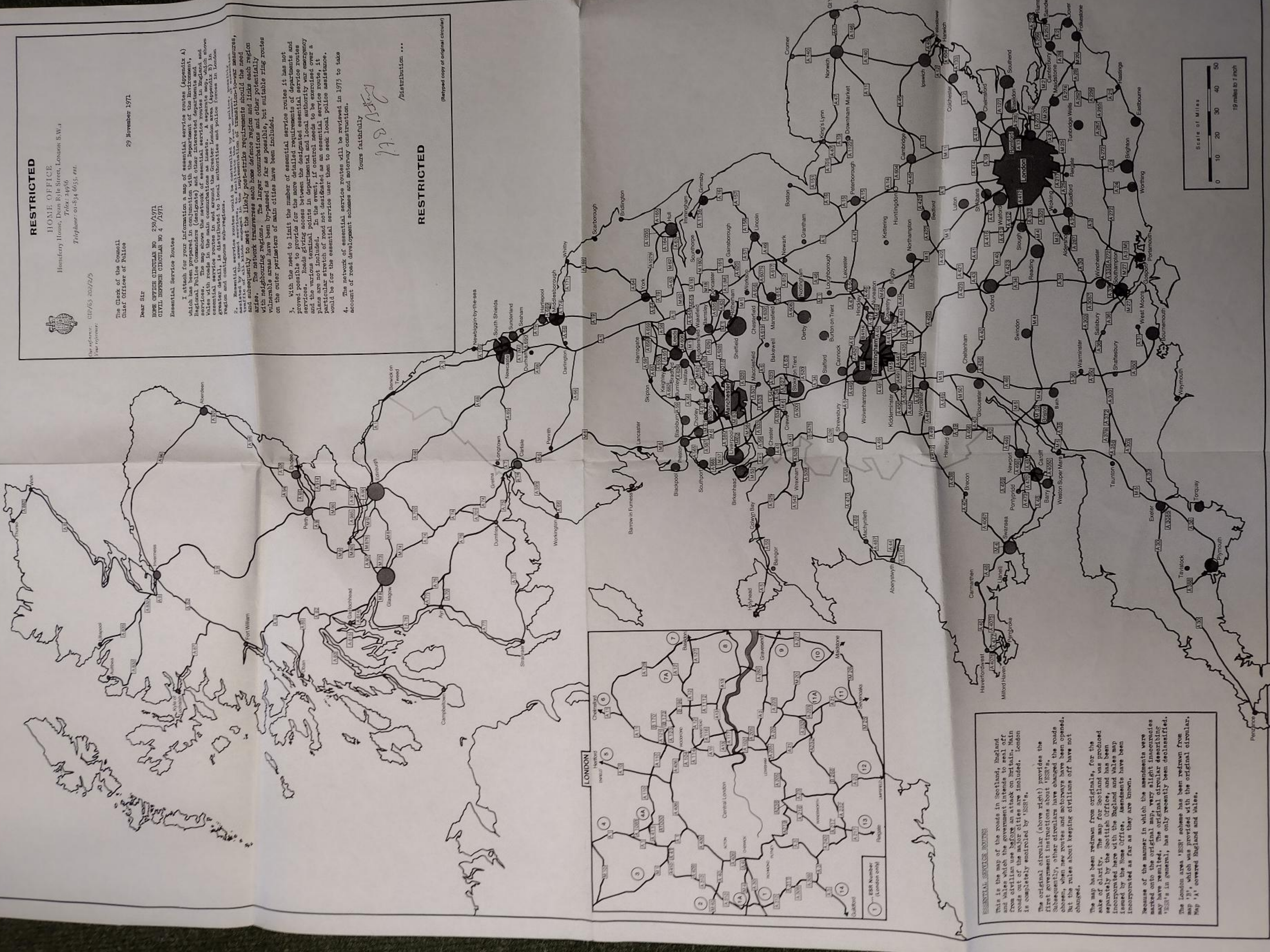
Yours faithfully

*J. D. A. G.*

/Distribution ...

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(Revised copy of original Circular)



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This is the map of the roads in Scotland, Shetland and Wales which the government intends to seal for use by civil defence forces in the event of a major attack on the main roads out of the major cities and towns. The map is completely controlled by 'ESSR's'.

The original circular (above right) provides the first government instructions about 'ESSR's'. Subsequently, other circulars have changed the rules, when new routes and motorways have been opened. But the rules about keeping civilians off have not changed.

The map has been redrawn from originals, for the sake of clarity. The map for Scotland was produced separately by the Scottish Office, and has been incorporated here with the England and Wales map issued by the Home Office. Amendments have been incorporated as far as they are known.

Because of the manner in which the amendments were marked onto the original map, very slight inaccuracies may have resulted. The original circular describing 'ESSR's' in general, has only recently been declassified.

The London area 'ESSR' scheme has been redrawn from map 'J', which was provided with the original circular. Map 'J' covered England and Wales.