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Policy Unit

PRIME MINISTER

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REVIEW OF GOVERNMENT STRATEGY

We are meeting, with Geoffrey and Keith, tomorrow at Chequers. The advisers present will be Robin Ibbs, Alan Walters, David Young, David Wolfson, Norman Strauss and myself. This note gives the background to, and purpose of, the meeting.

BACKGROUND

You will remember that you, David Wolfson and I had a long discussion one evening last spring about the general problems of "mode of operation", with special emphasis on policy-making, the Whitehall machinery, carrying colleagues on difficult issues etc.

During the summer, I discussed the problems of "organisation and method" with other advisers who had experience of the same problems in business, including all those coming tomorrow (except for Alan, who was not on board at that time) and also with Derek Rayner, Terry Burns, Peter Cropper and Peter Middleton.

There was a fair unanimity of views on the issues raised in our "Strategy Paper No.3".

PURPOSE OF THE MEETING

The meeting is NOT for the purpose of solving specific policy problems. (Nothing would be easier than to spend the whole afternoon on BL or the PSBR.) What the meeting is about is finding better ways of structuring the big policy problems, organising our resources to tackle them and ensuring that you are not then hampered by the difficulties of carrying the colleagues with you on the hard decisions.

In other words, the problem we are addressing is not BL, or energy prices, or monetary policy, or PSBR. The problem we are trying to solve (or at least start to solve) is "how to improve Government's performance at problem-solving".

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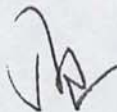
THE FORM OF THE MEETING

I would like to start with a fairly formal presentation by the advisers. This presentation will give you an idea of the way big business would approach the work needed to make the Government strategy happen. It will not be presented as the way to do it (there is no such thing); simply as an approach which may have something to offer.

We can then discuss the approach in more detail, and with relevance to specific problems. But the aim is to invest some effort in problem-solving capability, not to try to solve the problems themselves. Using the analogy from our Strategy paper, we are trying to build a factory to produce good motor cars; not to get the Board of Directors onto the shop floor to assemble the first motor car with their bare hands.

We will bring a few charts with us, ^{tomorrow afternoon} and I think the big table upstairs would probably be the best place, if that suits you.

I am copying this minute to Geoffrey, Keith and the rest of us who are attending the meeting.



JOHN HOSKYNS