

010
STAFF - IN CONFIDENCE

MR. WHITMORE

CSD's Demise - Press

As I mentioned last night, I think I must raise with you at this early stage the staffing implications of the dismemberment of the CSD and the incorporation of part of it - from our information point of view, the "positive" part - in Cabinet Office.

As you know, we have taken on quite a bit of Cabinet Office work over the last two years without a compensating increase in staff, leaving aside the help provided by secondees towards the end of their brief periods with us. Among the elements are Rayner, Brian Unwin's Information Technology Unit and ACARD, not to mention CPRS and security issues. The workload has latterly been increased by the Lord President's decision to disband his Press Office.

I cannot pretend that Cabinet Office burdens are onerous or that they occupy a great deal of time over the year, though we can, from time to time, be exceedingly busy on some topics. Similarly, I cannot pretend that we are systematic or creative in our information approach to these Cabinet Office responsibilities; we tend to see them rather as jobs to be picked up as and when they arise.

But I think there is a limit to how much more we can take on without a review of how we do so and how we reorganise ourselves to cope with any increase in responsibility.

I think now is a suitable time to pause and think about the extent, if any, to which No. 10 Press Office should take the lead in coping with increasing Cabinet Office responsibilities.

There are a number of possible approaches:

- (i) with the acquisition of personnel management, training and efficiency - which offer positive creative elements in Civil Service promotion - Cabinet Office should have its own information set up and which would sweep up the other elements of its

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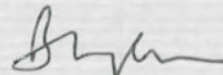
work which we now handle. I am bound to say I do not think this would work particularly well;

- (ii) concentrate such information staff as might be acquired by Cabinet Office solely on MPO, leaving us to carry the ball on other Cabinet Office activities with the possible exception of Rayner; this would work much better than (i) above;
- (iii) accept the logic of Cabinet Office's development into something like a Prime Minister's Department and formally vest responsibility for all Cabinet Office information effort, including MPO, in No. 10 Press Office, subject to suitable reinforcement; if we went this route, we would have to be sure it did not interfere with our essential tasks.

All this needs some thought - not least how far the Prime Minister wishes to go in acknowledging a de-facto Prime Minister's Department with the co-ordinating responsibility we have long had in Press Office; and how far it is felt wise Cabinet Office should have any information apparatus of its own.

Equally, I think we must examine whether it is intended that MPO should adopt an active, robust and aggressive Civil Service promotion policy which has been so sadly lacking in CSD over the last decade. If so, we shall need carefully to select those information officers charged with that responsibility. The present CSD information staff cannot be described as positive or energetic.

I think it is important over the next few days to address ourselves to these questions and determine them by positive decision rather than allow things to happen by default.



B. INGHAM

12 November, 1981



cc Bernard
Ingham

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

MPO : PRESS ARRANGEMENTS

I attach a copy of a minute from Mr Ingham to me about the arrangements for handling press matters following the creation of the MPO.

I think that it would be very helpful if you could see him and me fairly soon to discuss the issues he raises. If you agree, perhaps Mr Wright could arrange a time with me.

JAW.

12 November 1981

Discussion with Sir R. Armstrong,
Mr Carruthers & Mr Ingham.

Ref. A06031

MR WHITMORE *WH*
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WH

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c Mr Ingham

MPO: Press Arrangements

Thank you for your minute of 12 November.

2. I shall be very happy to discuss with you and Mr Ingham (in the first instance) the issues which Mr Ingham's minute raises.

3. The next stage after that would be to discuss whatever was the outcome of our meeting with others, both in the Cabinet Office and in the MPO.

4. As at present instructed, I do not favour Mr Ingham's third option; I think I come out somewhere between the first and second. For various reasons I should like to make the Press Office a "common service" for the Cabinet Office and the MPO. From the Cabinet Office, such an office could handle the business of ACARD, the Information Technology Unit and (probably) the CPRS. We ought to consider whether it could also take on the CSO. But I would want to keep out of the Cabinet Office/MPO Press Office matters for which the Prime Minister has a special personal responsibility and I have a personal responsibility to her: namely security matters, machinery of Government questions, senior appointments and Honours. On all these matters I should want to continue to deal with the Press Office at No 10.

5. We will be in touch about a meeting.

RA

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

19 November 1981

9/12/11

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MAD "11/11"

The arrangement, which should be cleared with the opposition today, is that for the time being Mr Hayhoe will answer CSD (excluding MPO) type questions during Questions to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and MPO questions in the 10min slot previously occupied by CSD questions

It is the Chancellor of the Exchequer's long term aim to integrate Mr Hayhoe more fully into his ministerial team and as such there should come a time when he will be answering not only CSD questions and when the CST or FST will answer for him (During Chancellor of Exchequer Questions he always has 2 junior ministers answering as well and he wants to return to this when Mr Hayhoe is well settled in.)

T. 7/12.

B/F 3/12

Gout Med

DUTY CLERK

Clive is to go to a meeting with Sir Robert Armstrong at 3.00 pm on 4 December to discuss MPO press arrangements with No 10. Bernard is also going: I am not sure if the note I did to Bernard on this subject found its way to Confidential, and that there are in fact subsequent papers. If there are not, I presume Bernard will have them.

Angela

26.11.81

Mr. [unclear]

12

Before I answer the Prime Minister
I should be prepared for your news.

11x

Ref. A05931

MR. WHITMORE


Future of the Central Departments

I understand that Sir Ian Bancroft and Sir John Herbecq are likely to agree to see journalists, if journalists ask to see them, after Thursday's announcement.

2. I have discussed this with Sir Douglas Wass. Neither of us thinks that we should give any interviews on the record. We think, however, that it would be advisable that we should be able to agree to see journalists on an off-the-record, non-attributable and background basis, if we are asked to do so. I do not think that there are likely to be many such requests, but I suppose that the "Whitehall correspondents" like Peter Hennessy might seek to come and talk on that basis. If we were able to do so, that would enable us to make sure that the case for the changes now proposed was properly in their minds.

3. As you know, I have made it a rule not to give interviews since I became Secretary of the Cabinet, and I do not propose to depart from that rule. But I think that there is advantage in agreeing to see people unattributably on this occasion.

4. I should be grateful if you would let me know whether the Prime Minister is content.



ROBERT ARMSTRONG

10th November, 1981