

Prime Minister

Ref. A085/488

MR BUTLER

Mr Ponting

Mr Ponting will be seen by the Principal Establishment Officer of the Ministry of Defence on the morning of 14 February.

2. It is possible, perhaps likely, that Mr Ponting will say that he has no wish to continue a career in the Civil Service, and that he wishes to resign. That would be accepted, with no financial consequence beyond making up his back pay for the period he has been under suspension.

3. If, however, Mr Ponting does not indicate a wish to resign, or positively indicates a wish to continue as a civil servant, he will be told that he cannot resume his career in the Ministry of Defence. He will be warned that it will not be easy or quick to find him a satisfactory alternative posting, but that the Ministry of Defence would ask the Cabinet Office (MPO) to explore possibilities.

4. In the circumstances I think that, if he were to indicate a wish to continue in the Civil Service, we can do no less than this. It would not be easy and might be impossible to find a suitable position for him, given what he has done; and his enthusiasm for continuing with the Service (if that was his wish) might fade, depending on what he could be offered and how long it took to offer it to him.

5. I am sending a copy of this minute to the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.

Approved by
ROBERT ARMSTRONG
and signed in his absence

12 February 1985

Ponting was told that no further job could be ~~find~~ found for him in the MOD on security grounds. He had 14 days to appeal against their decision.

If he wished to remain in the public service the MOD would cooperate with MPO to see if there were other openings for him.

Since he had not resigned, he would be bound by Civil Service rules as regards public appearances, the publication of books and articles & so on.



Leo

WJ

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG
CABINET OFFICE

MR PONTING

Thank you for your minute of 12 February
(A085/488) which the Prime Minister has seen and
noted.

RB

13 February, 1985

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