

Ref: A05177

MR. WHITMORE

Information Technology Advisers

Your minute to me of 22nd June reported that the Prime Minister had written to Mr. Southgate, the sixth member of the new panel of information technology advisers.

2. Mr. Southgate has now written accepting the invitation. The way is clear, therefore, to announce the appointment of the Panel and the formation of the Cabinet Office IT Secretariat by means of a written Parliamentary Answer as previously agreed by the Prime Minister.

3. The next meeting with the advisers will be held on 8th July. There would be advantage in making the announcement before then. I therefore suggest that, if the Prime Minister is content, it should be made next Thursday, 2nd July, and I attach a draft Parliamentary Question and Answer which is in similar terms to that previously submitted and approved by the Prime Minister.

4. We would also propose to accompany the Parliamentary Question with a simple Press notice which would contain brief biographical details of the advisers.

5. It is for consideration whether the Answer should name the senior official (Mr. J. B. Unwin) who is in charge of the team in the Cabinet Office. I doubt whether there is much practical significance in this: Mr. Unwin's position is known to the advisers, and his role will become widely known in the industries concerned. There is certainly no point in trying to make a secret of it; and there would be some positive advantage in letting it be known publicly and without delay. Appointments of this kind are not usually announced, however, in Parliamentary Answers. I therefore suggest that the proposed Press Notice should state (or Mr. Ingham should be authorised to tell the Lobby) that the Cabinet Office team will be led by Mr. J. B. Unwin, whose curriculum vitae can be found on page 2645 of Who's Who 1981.

Robert Armstrong

(Approved by Sir R. Armstrong and signed on his behalf)

30th June, 1981

Prime Minister (through CAW)

1. Content that we should now arrange this question & answer?

Yes

2. Agree that Mr Unwin can be identified in lobby briefing?

Yes

MA 30/6/81

MS



DRAFT PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION -

To ask the Prime Minister, following the designation of 1982 as Information Technology Year, what steps she is taking to ensure that Government policies on information technology take fully into account the needs of private sector suppliers and users of the relevant products and services.

DRAFT ANSWER

The Government fully recognise the importance of information technology (IT) for the future industrial and commercial success of the United Kingdom and the central role that Government must play in promoting its development and application. Government policies are already directed towards encouraging markets for IT products and services that will stimulate new, profitable business opportunities; and the Government see the effective application of IT as a powerful tool in raising the efficiency and quality of both private and public sector services.

2. In order to ensure that Government policies and actions are securely based on a close appreciation of market needs and opportunities I am appointing a panel of IT advisers who will be available to advise me and my colleagues on all aspects of IT.

The advisers are:-

- Mr. M. J. Aldrich - Managing Director, Rediffusion Computers Ltd
- Mr. I. H. Cohen - Managing Director, Mullard Ltd
- Mr. C. A. Davies - Managing Director, Information Technology Ltd
- Dr. D. F. Hartley - Director, Cambridge University Computing Services
- Mr. C. N. Read - Director, Inter-Bank Research Organisation
- Mr. C. G. Southgate - Chief Executive, Computer Services Division, British Oxygen Co. Ltd



In addition, I have established a small team within the Cabinet Office, made up of both permanent officials and personnel on secondment from the private sector. This unit will be a principal link between the advisers and Departments, will help to promote the use of IT within Government, and will seek to ensure the overall coherence of Government policies towards IT, particularly in so far as they span the responsibilities of more than one Department.

3. These new arrangements will strengthen and broaden the many existing contacts between my right honourable friend the Secretary of State for Industry and the Minister of State for Industry and IT on the one hand and private commerce and industry on the other and will reinforce the initiatives already taken by them and their officials.

Information Technology

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Mr. Ian Lloyd asked the Prime Minister, following the designation of 1982 as Information Technology Year, what steps she is taking to ensure that Government policies on information technology take fully into account the needs of private sector suppliers and users of the relevant products and services.

**The Prime Minister:** The Government fully recognise the importance of information technology for the future industrial and commercial success of the United Kingdom and the central role that the Government must play in promoting its development and application. Government policies are already directed toward encouraging markets for IT products and services that will stimulate new, profitable business opportunities; and the Government see the effective application of IT as a powerful tool in raising the efficiency and quality of both private and public sector services.

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These new arrangements will strengthen and broaden the many existing contacts between my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Industry and the Minister for Industry and Information Technology on the one hand and private commerce and industry on the other and will reinforce the initiatives already taken by them and their officials.



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10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

MR. WRIGHT  
CABINET OFFICE

The Prime Minister has seen Sir Robert Armstrong's minute of 30 June, about information technology advisers.

We will be arranging to answer the suggested Question tomorrow, 2 July.

The Prime Minister is content that there should be a press notice listing the advisers, and that Mr. Ingham should be authorised to tell the Lobby that the Cabinet Office team will be led by Mr. J.B. Unwin.

I am sending a copy of this minute to Mr. Ingham. No doubt the Information Technology Secretariat will liaise with our Press Office about the handling of the press notice.

M. A. PATTISON

1 July 1981