

3
Prime Minister ①

Ref. A08220

Agree to X?

PRIME MINISTER

Yes not

ML 26/4

Ministerial Committee on Economic Strategy: Sub-Committee on
Telecommunications Policy

This Sub-Committee of the Economic Strategy Committee was set up some weeks ago under your chairmanship "To consider questions of policy on telecommunications and to report as appropriate to the Ministerial Committee on Economic Strategy". The members of the Committee are the Home Secretary, the Secretary of State for Industry, the Lord President, the Chief Secretary, the Secretary of State for Trade and the Minister of State in the Department of Industry responsible for Information Technology.

2. The work of this Committee and the issues which it will be considering are certain to have a bearing on the Government's policy on interception. For this reason, the Committee's deliberations will be of considerable interest to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. (The Home Secretary is also concerned with the interception aspects of the Committee's work, but he is a member of the Committee in view of the Home Office's wider interest in telecommunications policy.) The Foreign and Commonwealth Office's interest will be only intermittent and does not justify the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary being a member of the Committee. In view however, of the ramifications on new technological developments in this field and their consequent effect on Government policy

I should like your authority to ensure that they see all the Sub-Committee's minutes and papers and also that the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary should have the right to ask to attend meetings of the Sub-Committee at which items of concern to his Department are to be taken.

RIA

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

26th April 1982

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SECRET



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

21 April 1982

Sir Robert Armstrong KCB CVO
CABINET OFFICE

① AJC to see *Seen.*

② PA

MUS.

My dear Robert,

CABINET MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC STRATEGY
(SUB-COMMITTEE ON TELECOMMUNICATIONS POLICY)

1. I see from your minute E(TP)(82)1 of 14 April 1982 that a new Cabinet Sub-Committee on this topic has been established.
2. I would not want the legitimate interests of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to be overlooked in this Committee, although the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary has agreed that we need not ask to be made full members of it. It is quite likely that a fair proportion of the papers that come before this Committee will have substantive international ramifications; and we would also wish to have an opportunity to comment on the possible implications for interception of any major new developments in this field.
3. I would be grateful therefore if we could be sent as a matter of course all papers that are circulated to this Sub-Committee. Perhaps you could also kindly confirm that the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary would have the right to attend meetings at which items of concern to us for either of the reasons outlined above are due to be taken?
4. I am sending copies of this letter to Brian Cubbon at the Home Office and to John Coles at Number 10.

Yours ever
Antony

Antony Acland



Post + Telecomm's

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dl

~~SECRET~~



~~bc J Vereker~~

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG
CABINET OFFICE

Ministerial Committee on Economic Strategy:
Sub-Committee on Telecommunications Policy

The Prime Minister was grateful for your minute of 26 April about the interest of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in the matters considered by the Sub-Committee on Telecommunications Policy.

The Prime Minister agrees that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office should see all the Sub-Committee's minutes and papers, and that the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary should have the right to ask to attend meetings of the Sub-Committee at which items of concern to his Department are to be taken.

M. C. SCHOLAR

27 April 1982

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SP