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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

The Prime Minister has seen and noted your minute A06020 of 20 November 1981 about Mr David Hunt's chairmanship of the Conservative Group for Europe.

✓ I am sending a copy of this minute to the Chief Whip.

JMW.

23 November 1981

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Ref: A06020

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MR. WHITMORE

Prime Minister.
This seems sensible. But if you
have any doubts, you could
mention them to the Chief Whip
when he comes in on Monday
morning. AMJ 20xi

Earlier in the year Mr. David Hunt MP was appointed Chairman of the Conservative Group for Europe.

2. Since then he has been appointed one of the Government Whips. The Chief Whip is anxious that he should not have to resign immediately from the Conservative Group for Europe.

3. It is arguable whether the guidance in Questions of Procedure for Ministers could be held to apply in this case. Though the Conservative Group for Europe may be in some sense a pressure group, the purposes which it supports are wholly in line with Government policy, and it is not easy to see that any serious embarrassment could arise.

4. The Chief Whip, who raised this question with me, and I both think that it would be preferable for Mr. Hunt to be replaced by somebody who is not a member of the Government at the next natural opportunity: I understand that an election is due in May 1982. It would be convenient to take the time between now and then to identify a suitable replacement for Mr. Hunt, who in any case has only served for a very short time. The Chief Whip and I are therefore agreed that Mr. Hunt should be allowed to continue as Chairman of the Conservative Group for Europe until next May, in order to find time for a suitable replacement to be identified, but should not stand for re-election.

5. I put this note to you for information and record: it is not something which I think we need trouble the Prime Minister to approve.

6. I am sending a copy of this minute to the Chief Whip.

RA

Robert Armstrong

20th November 1981

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