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Cabinet
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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

The Prime Minister spoke to you this morning about your minute of 14 January (A083/0126) on the membership of Cabinet Committees and Ministerial Groups as a consequence of the recent changes in Ministerial responsibilities.

The Prime Minister was inclined to think that neither Mr Heseltine nor Mr King should be a member of E Committee, which in her view has now become too big. She asked you to suggest a revised and smaller membership of E Committee.

The Prime Minister agreed that Mr Heseltine should be a member of E(PU). She also agreed that Mr King should be a member of the sub-committees and groups listed in paragraph four of your minute, apart from E.

On MISC 14, the Prime Minister agreed that Mr King should succeed Mr Heseltine as a member of this group.

F.R.B.

. 18 January 1983

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

The Prime Minister was grateful for your minute of 14 January (A083/0126).

She would like to have a word with you about the issues raised in it, and particularly about the membership of E Committee and some of its sub-committees.

X) Perhaps we might look for an opportunity for you to have a word with the Prime Minister about this in the next day or two, since you are not due to have a business meeting with her this Friday.

F.R.B.

17 January 1983

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A7+

PM

MS

Ch

Joseph

Jenkin

Tebbit

Prior

Lockfield

Lawson

Take Janet off

Heseltine

King

*May we discuss
we we will change
of setting everyone
on E.*

Ref. A083/0126

PRIME MINISTER

Prime Minister

Agree that :-

- i. Mr. Heseltine succeeds Mr. Nott on E(PU) and E?
- ii. Mr. King succeeds Mr. Heseltine on the Committee in para. 4?
- iii. Mr. King succeeds Mr. Heseltine on MISC 14, subject to the Chancellor's views?

Will you talk to the Chancellor about MISC 14, or should Sir Robert?

I have been considering what changes are necessary in the membership of Cabinet Committees and Ministerial Groups as a consequence of the recent changes in Ministerial responsibilities. Membership of most Committees is by virtue of Ministers' Departmental responsibilities, and the changes thus follow automatically. The only questions of substance concern the membership of a number of Cabinet Committees and Ministerial Groups relating to economic matters and arise from the appointments of Mr Heseltine as Secretary of State for Defence and Mr King as Secretary of State for the Environment. My advice on these is set out below.

*FERB
14.11*

Secretary of State for Defence

2. Mr Nott was a member of the Ministerial Sub-Committee on Government Procurement Policy (E(PU)); in view of the importance of the procurement activities of the Ministry of Defence, it seems right that Mr Heseltine should be a member.

3. Mr Nott was also a member of the Ministerial Committee on Economic Strategy (E). I think that this was essentially a personal rather than a departmental membership. I imagine that you wish Mr Heseltine to continue as a member.

Secretary of State for the Environment

4. I suggest that Mr King should succeed Mr Heseltine as a member of the following.

E - why? Mr. H wants it first.

E(PU)

Ministerial Sub-Committee on Disposal of Public Sector Assets (E) (DL))

Ministerial Sub-Committee on Economic Affairs (E(EA))

Ministerial Sub-Committee on Nationalised Industries (E(NI))

✓ Ministerial Sub-Committee on Public Service Pay (E(PSP))

✓ Ministerial Group on Rate Support Grant (MISC 21)

✓ Ministerial Group on Local Government Organisation and Finance (MISC 79)

Questionable if it were not that the membership of E is so wide already

NO - the committee has got too large.

MISC 14

5. There is also the question of membership of the Ministerial Steering Group on Government Strategy (MISC 14). Before the change in portfolios, this was as follows.

Chancellor of the Exchequer (Chairman)

Secretary of State for Education and Science

(Secretary of State for the Environment (ie Mr Heseltine))

Secretary of State for Industry

Secretary of State for Employment

The membership is deliberately small. Although the Group's main concern has been with 'supply side' questions, which involve the departmental responsibilities of its members, it is not restricted to such questions: it has, for example, considered policy on research and development, which impinges a good deal on the responsibilities of Ministry of Defence. Equally, it could be argued that other Departments have at least as strong an interest as the Department of the Environment in 'supply side' matters. To a large extent, then, membership is as much personal as departmental. But Mr Heseltine will be very fully occupied at the Ministry of Defence, and I suggest that Mr King should take his place on MISC 14.

6. I should be grateful for your instructions on whether:
- (a) Mr Heseltine is to remain a member of MISC 14; and
 - (b) Mr King should become a member.

Before reaching a final view, you may wish to have a word with the Chancellor of the Exchequer as Chairman of MISC 14; alternatively I could do so in the light of your preliminary view.

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

14th January 1983