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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

International Science and
Technology Co-ordination

The Prime Minister has noted your minute of 22 February on administrative changes affecting our handling of international science and technology questions.

(Charles Powell)

25 February 1985

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Ref. A085/554

PRIME MINISTER

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Prime Minister
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International Science and Technology Co-ordination

This minute reports administrative changes affecting our handling of international science and technology.

2. In 1984, it was agreed that further efforts were needed to develop and integrate Departments' policies towards international science and technology co-operation. This matter is becoming an increasingly important dimension of science and technology policy and of diplomacy and it was clear that, with the spread of Departmental interests, a more co-ordinated approach was needed in order for the UK to gain maximum benefit from its international linkages and help assess the United Kingdom's priorities in this area.

3. It was agreed that the increased level of co-ordination and effort should centre on the Science and Technology Secretariat within the Cabinet Office, which is led by Sir Robin Nicholson. We shall make a modest strengthening of the Secretariat in this area, by transferring a few people from the Department of Trade and Industry and by bringing someone in from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to fill a previously unfilled position in the Secretariat for this work; there will be no overall increase in manpower. A new sub-committee of the Official Committee on Science and Technology, dealing with international science and technology policy, is being set up: it will be chaired by Sir Robin Nicholson and is expected to meet three or four times a year.



4. Departments are keen to see these changes made. They are consistent with the role of the Science and Technology Secretariat and with Sir Robin Nicholson's current responsibilities. The response to the House of Lords Select Committee Report (Cmnd 8591) identified international science and technology as one area to which the Chief Scientific Adviser should turn his attention, and these changes should permit him to discharge that responsibility more effectively.

5. No changes of Ministerial responsibility are involved.

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ROBERT ARMSTRONG

22 February 1985