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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

5 June 1985

CHAIRMANSHIP OF UKAEA

The Prime Minister held a meeting this afternoon to discuss the Chairmanship of UKAEA. Present were the Secretary of State for Energy, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and Sir Robert Armstrong.

The Prime Minister reported on her meeting with Sir Robin Nicholson. She felt that, in the light of the note he had subsequently submitted, Sir Robin did not really want the post and, given the differences which remained between him and Ministers on the way UKAEA should develop, it would be wrong to press him to take the job. This was agreed.

The Secretary of State for Energy said he would urgently consider alternative candidates and would consult Sir Walter Marshall on this. He was anxious to find an able Chairman who was both commercially minded and esteemed by the scientific community. The Government's consideration of the inspector's report on Sizewell would open up a fierce debate on nuclear questions and it was essential that the Government had high quality Chairmen for both UKAEA and BNFL.

I would be grateful if you could prepare a draft letter which the Prime Minister could send to Sir Robin setting out the conclusions Ministers have reached.

I am copying this letter to Rachel Lomax (HM Treasury) and Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

(Andrew Turnbull)

Geoff Dart, Esq.,
Department of Energy.

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