

Prime Minister

Content that we should let Mr.

Fielding's name go forward for this post
and that, if this is obstructed, M. Thorn
should be spoken to as in para. 6?

A.S.C. 14/6

Ref. A08660

PRIME MINISTER

European Community Appointment: Director General for External Relations

We learned last week of a proposal from the European Commission that the present Director General for External Relations, Sir Roy Denman, should be moved from this post to take over as European Community Representative in Washington, to succeed the present incumbent who was likely to retire. This proposal came as a surprise although there has been a history of strained relations between Sir Roy Denman and his Commissioner, Herr Haferkamp. Although these difficulties have been papered over in the past, it has been fairly well known within the Community that Herr Haferkamp would like to get rid of Sir Roy Denman if he could. It appears that at the beginning of last week Herr Haferkamp told Monsieur Thorn that, if Sir Roy Denman did not go, he, Haferkamp, would leave. For the President of the Commission there could be only one answer to that choice.

2. Contrary to our expectations, Sir Roy Denman did not resist the decision that he should be moved, and has acquiesced in it. One of the influences on him seems to have been that he has been Director General for five-and-a-half years now, and has found the post very wearing. It involves a great deal of travel and all-night negotiation and although he did not necessarily wish for a break now, he does not think that he could do the job for another seven years until he retires at the age of 65. Having seen Sir Roy Denman myself at Versailles, I can confirm that he appeared to be unexpectedly tired; I am not very surprised that he did not put up much resistance when offered the job in Washington.

3. If Sir Roy Denman moves to Washington, it is very much in British interests that the key post of Director General for External Affairs, which he will vacate, should continue to be filled by a Briton. The proposal put forward within the Commission, and apparently endorsed by both Monsieur Thorn and Herr Haferkamp, would (if carried through) achieve that object. It is that Mr. Leslie Fielding, at present head of the Commission's office in Tokyo, should

replace Sir Roy Denman. Mr. Fielding, who is nearly 50, was formerly a member of the Diplomatic Service. He was seconded to the European Commission in Brussels in 1973 to join the External Relations Directorate General. He transferred permanently to the Commission in 1979, having been appointed the Commission representative in Tokyo in 1978. If he is the Commission's preferred choice, it would be difficult for us not to endorse him.

4. I took the opportunity of discussing this problem on 11th June with my Permanent Secretary colleagues on the Senior Appointments Selection Committee. We agreed that, although Mr. Fielding is a credible candidate for the post of Director General (External Relations), he is not of the same stature as Sir Roy Denman. This causes us some concern: we do not wish to find that, in endorsing Mr. Fielding's candidature, we are supporting someone who will not find favour with the other members of the Community. If Mr. Fielding were thought by others to be an inadequate replacement for Sir Roy Denman, another Community Government might propose an alternative candidate of greater stature who could command wider support. We might thereby run the risk of losing one of the most important Director General posts in the Commission.

5. However, in addition to the oral assurances which have been given about Mr. Fielding succeeding Sir Roy Denman, the matter was discussed at last Thursday's lunch meeting of Permanent Representatives, and (as you will see from the attached reporting telegram) the intention to appoint Mr. Fielding was confirmed by the Secretary General of the Commission. My Permanent Secretary colleagues and I concluded, therefore, that the right course at this stage was that the Government should allow matters to take their course and let Mr. Fielding's name run for the Director General post.

6. If he gets the post we shall have succeeded in holding on to an important area of Community activity. If, on the other hand, there appears to be any risk of other Community Governments putting in a bid for the post with alternative candidates to Fielding, we may need to intervene sharply with Monsieur Thorn on two points. We should have to make it clear to him that we had agreed not to question the decision that Fielding's name should go forward for the Director General post because that was a matter of the movement of personnel within the

Commission itself and we did not wish to dispute their assessment of the qualifications which Fielding had for the job. We should have to go on to say that, if it was now being suggested that the Commission themselves were not going to accept their own nominated candidate, all bets were off, we were in a new situation in which any number of possible candidates could be considered, that it remained our view that this post should be held by a Briton, and that we should have our own names to put forward as successors to Sir Roy Denman. I am consulting among Departments about possible candidates of the same sort of stature as Sir Roy Denman whose names might be put forward if it were to prove necessary.

7. I should be grateful to know if you are content with what is proposed. Sir Antony Acland is similarly consulting the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary.

REA

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

14th June, 1982



FILE

Envo bel

RM

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

EUROPEAN COMMUNITY APPOINTMENT: DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

The Prime Minister has seen your minute of 14 June. She is content that Mr Fieldings name should be run for the post of Director General and that, if there appears to be any risk of other Governments bidding for the post, M. Thorn should be spoken to as proposed in paragraph 6 of your minute.

A. L. COLES

16 June, 1982

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FM UKREP BRUSSELS 101953Z JUN 82
TO PRIORITY FCO
TELNO 2379 OF 10 JUNE

SENIOR STAFF IN CONFIDENCE

MY TELNO 2341: DIRECTOR-GENERAL FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS AT
THE COMMISSION

1. AT TODAY'S COREPER LUNCH NOEL REPORTED ON DENMAN'S APPOINTMENT
WASHINGTON. HE MENTIONED THAT HE WOULD LEAVE HIS PRESENT
POST ON 1 SEPTEMBER BUT WOULD CONTINUE TO PLAY A ROLE IN THE
PREPARATION OF THE GATT MINISTERIAL MEETING. IN ACCORDANCE WITH
NORMAL PROCEDURES THE COMMISSION NEEDED TO KNOW URGENTLY IF ANY
MEMBER GOVERNMENT HAD ANY OBJECTION.

2. NOEL SAID THAT THE COMMISSION'S INTENTION WAS TO NOMINATE FIELDING
TO DENMAN'S PRESENT POST. IN ANSWER TO A QUESTION ABOUT
DE KERGORLAY, HE SAID THAT HE MIGHT LEAVE THE COMMISSION.

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