

PRIME MINISTER

CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE JOINT INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE

Sir Robert Armstrong's minute advises below:

(a) He and Mr. Whitmore do not think that Sir James Eberle would be right as Chairman of the JIC.

*Too long*

(b) Sir Antony Duff should be confirmed in the combined post of Chairman of JIC and Intelligence Co-ordinator for a year; and that he should be given personal promotion to Second Permanent Secretary, the grade in which he retired.

*No*

(c) The arrangement of combining the chairmanship of JIC with the post of Co-ordinator should be reviewed towards the end of this year.

(d) In the meantime we should continue to collect names of possible candidates for appointment to either or both these posts and consider them again having reviewed whether the two posts should be combined.

This does not carry us much further forward. On the other hand, nobody has been able to think of an ideal alternative candidate as Chairman of the JIC. Are you prepared to agree with Sir Robert Armstrong's recommendations? Or would you like to have a wider meeting to discuss them, say with the Home Secretary, Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and the Defence Secretary, as well as with Sir Robert?

*We really must make up  
our minds on the  
new permanent  
head of JIC soon*

*F.R.B.*

18 February 1983

*and speak here within  
3 months  
not*



Zu AH

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Principal Private Secretary*

CONFIDENTIAL  
SENIOR STAFF IN CONFIDENCE

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE JOINT INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE

The Prime Minister has seen your minute to me of 18 February (A083/0589).

She is inclined to think that a year would be too long before appointing a permanent Chairman of the JIC in succession to Sir Antony Duff. She has minuted:-

"We really must make up our minds on the new permanent head of JIC soon and appoint him within three months".

I will arrange for you to have a word with the Prime Minister about the next steps.

F.R.B.

21 February 1983

AH

CONFIDENTIAL AND SENIOR STAFF IN CONFIDENCE

MR. BUTLER

Chairmanship of the Joint Intelligence Committee


In her speech in the House of Commons on 25th January 1983 the Prime Minister said:

"I think it right to accept the proposal that its [sc the JIC's] Chairmanship should be held by a member of the Cabinet Office who is able to give more time to supervising the work of the assessments' machinery. I therefore intend to appoint as Chairman of the JIC an official of the Cabinet Office who will be engaged full time on intelligence matters. He will have direct access to the Prime Minister in the same way as the Heads of the security and intelligence agencies!"

2. The Prime Minister agreed that as an immediate measure Sir Antony Duff should take over the Chairmanship of the JIC. I have proposed, and you have told me that the Prime Minister is not averse to agreeing, that Sir Antony Duff should be asked to continue as the Chairman of the JIC, at least initially. She thought that Admiral Sir James Eberle might be a possibility to take over at some stage, and you asked me to consult Mr. Whitmore about that and report back.

3. That I have now done. Sir James Eberle has of course retired from the Navy, and would like something to do. He is an intelligent man, and a very nice one. But Mr. Whitmore and I both think that he is not the man for the Chairmanship of the JIC. He has no close experience of handling intelligence business; and, as Mr. Whitmore puts it, he is too much "all over the shop".

4. I hope that the Prime Minister will agree that we should now confirm the decision to ask Sir Antony Duff to continue as the Chairman of the JIC, at least initially, in addition to his duties as Intelligence Co-ordinator. If that is agreed, I propose to give him additional support on his work as Intelligence Co-ordinator, so as to free him to give more time to the work of intelligence assessment machinery.

  
CONFIDENTIAL AND SENIOR STAFF IN CONFIDENCE

5. If this addition to his responsibilities is agreed, I should like to seek approval to upgrade Sir Antony Duff from Deputy Secretary to Second Permanent Secretary. This would not increase the number of Open Structure posts in the Cabinet Office. It would be in the first instance a personal promotion, without prejudice to the grading of any successor as Intelligence Co-ordinator or as Chairman of the JIC (but if the successor was also going to combine the two jobs, I should probably want to argue that he should carry Second Permanent Secretary grading). Because of the increase in salary levels since Sir Antony Duff retired as the equivalent of a Second Permanent Secretary, he is no longer able to 'top up' his salary as a Deputy Secretary. I should like to correct this anomaly, and grade (and pay) him as a Second Permanent Secretary - the grade in which he retired.

6. The confirmation of Sir Antony Duff's appointment as Chairman of the JIC, at least initially, will give us time to consider what is the best arrangement in the longer term for a Chairman of the JIC in the Cabinet Office. There is general agreement that the duties of the Chairman of the JIC do not of themselves constitute a full-time job. On the other hand it would not be acceptable to have as Chairman of the JIC someone who came in to the office only on a part-time basis: we need to have somebody who is around in the Cabinet Office on a full-time basis, and able to make himself available for JIC duty whenever so required. The duties of Chairman of the JIC need therefore to be combined with other duties in the Cabinet Office.

7. Given that the Chairman of the JIC ought to be not less than a Deputy Secretary in rank, I have so far identified three possible arrangements:

- (a) To combine the duties of Chairman of the JIC with those of the Deputy Secretary in charge of the Defence and Overseas Policy Secretariat.
- (b) To combine the duties of Chairman of the JIC with those of the Head of the Assessments Staff.
- (c) To combine the duties of Chairman of the JIC with those of the Intelligence Co-ordinator.

CONFIDENTIAL AND SENIOR STAFF IN CONFIDENCE

8. The first of these combinations (a) would be possible in normal times, if the Deputy Secretary in charge of the OD Secretariat was relieved of other duties (e.g. responsibility for the Civil Contingencies Unit). But it would probably be unsatisfactory in any situation like the South Atlantic crisis of last year, because, as that experience showed, the Deputy Secretary in charge of the OD Secretariat would be very fully occupied on crisis management, just at a time when he would need to be spending more rather than less time on the intelligence assessments.

9. The main objection to course (b) - combining the Chairman of the JIC with the Head of the Assessments Staff - is that the Head of the Assessments Staff is engaged for a substantial amount of his time on the actual preparation of assessments. It is important that the Chairman of the JIC should not be committed to the assessments that come before the JIC: that would make it difficult for him to act as the Chairman of a Committee to which they were submitted for consideration and clearance. It follows that we shall continue to need someone who is not the Chairman of the JIC to do what the Head of the Assessments Staff does, and we cannot combine that with the Chairmanship of the JIC.

*This conclusion must be right.*

10. That brings us back to the third course, (c), that of combining the duties of Chairman of the JIC with those of Intelligence Co-ordinator. This should be feasible: it is only relatively recently that the job of Intelligence Co-ordinator has been treated as being a full-time job. As I have indicated, however, this is likely to depend upon giving the Intelligence Co-ordinator some additional support in that function. The main objection to this combination would be likely to come from the Heads of the intelligence agencies: they will fear that with this combination of duties the Intelligence Co-ordinator would become over-mighty - what they tend to call an Intelligence Czar. But one advantage of the interim arrangement now proposed is that they will certainly not fear that with Sir Antony Duff in the job, and his time in it may help to diminish their apprehensions.

CONFIDENTIAL AND SENIOR STAFF IN CONFIDENCE

11. There may be other possibilities which I have not thought of. But, of the three courses indicated in paragraph 7, my present judgment is that (c) - the combination of Intelligence Co-ordinator and Chairman of JIC - is likely to be the most practical and sensible. The advantage of having Sir Antony Duff doing the combined duties initially is that it will give us an opportunity to test that judgment against experience over the coming months. We should in my judgment - and that of others with whom I have discussed these matters before making this submission - run with it as a provisional arrangement for a year, if we are to be able to make a considered decision on this.

12. Sir Antony Duff's present three-year 'contract' as Intelligence Co-ordinator expires in September 1983. He would be willing - indeed he would like - to continue to serve for a further term if so invited. Inviting him to do so would not commit us to continue him as Chairman of the JIC as well as Intelligence Co-ordinator, if we wanted to split the two posts apart in the longer term: he could continue as Intelligence Co-ordinator only.

13. I have not yet reached any conclusions on a possible list of people who might be other candidates for the Chairmanship of the JIC, or for the post of Intelligence Co-ordinator, or for a combination of the two, in the longer run. But there are likely to be certain limitations on the choice:

- (a) While one cannot exclude the possibility of choosing somebody who has had no previous experience of intelligence matters, it seems likely to be preferable to choose somebody who has had such experience. The candidates are likely therefore to come from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office or the Diplomatic Service or the Ministry of Defence, or conceivably from the Home Office or one of the agencies.
- (b) The Ministry of Defence is strongly represented on the JIC, and there is always a danger that the JIC will concentrate to excess on military intelligence. For this reason I believe that the Chairman of the JIC ought not to be a serving or retired officer of Her Majesty's Forces.

CONFIDENTIAL AND SENIOR STAFF IN CONFIDENCE

- (c) I believe that the Chairman of the JIC under the new arrangement should, like the Intelligence Co-ordinator, be someone who has nothing more to go for: that is, either someone for whom it is the last appointment in the public service before retirement, or someone who is kept on or brought back after retirement.

Conclusions and Recommendations

14. I conclude that we should continue to combine the positions of Intelligence Co-ordinator and Chairman of the JIC for an initial trial period of twelve months. This will give us time to discover whether that combination would be satisfactory as a long-term arrangement; to consider possible alternative arrangements, if experience during the period suggests that that combination is not a satisfactory arrangement; and to consider a list of candidates for the two appointments, whether in the longer term they are to be held separately or in combination.

15. I recommend that:

- (i) Sir Antony Duff should be asked to continue as Intelligence Co-ordinator and Chairman of the JIC until February 1984.
- (ii) The provisional arrangement of combining the two functions should be reviewed by the end of 1983, to see if it appears to be acceptable and durable as a permanent arrangement.
- (iii) In the meantime we should continue to consider the names of possible candidates for appointment to either or both of the posts, and review the list when we have decided upon the permanent arrangement.

RA

Robert Armstrong

18th February 1983