


Ref. A082/00031


MR BUTLER

I have been thinking further about the Prime Minister's wish to improve her access to the intelligence apparatus.

2. If the proposals which I am putting to you separately for Advisers on foreign affairs and defence affairs are accepted, the Prime Minister will have two extra people working for her in 10 Downing Street who will need to see intelligence assessments and will advise her on their significance in the areas of policy with which they are concerned.

3. As part of the proposals I have put to the Prime Minister for changes in the intelligence machinery, I have put separately to the Prime Minister a proposal that the chairmanship of the Joint Intelligence Committee should be brought from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and held by somebody of appropriate rank in the Cabinet Office; that this should in fact be the Intelligence Co-ordinator, Sir Antony Duff; that the Intelligence Co-ordinator should be given a Staff Officer to assist him in carrying out this function and in subjecting intelligence assessments and the assessment process to a constantly vigilant scrutiny; and that the Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee should have direct access to the Prime Minister. This would be a two-way access: he could ask to see her, and she could arrange to see him as often as she needed and wished.

4. It seems to me to be very doubtful whether there is room or need for any more than this. Experience may prove that there is; but I suggest that we should try the arrangements now proposed - the foreign and defence affairs Advisers plus the direct access to the Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee - for a trial period, and then review them in, say, a year's time, to see if they are sufficiently meeting the Prime Minister's needs.



ROBERT ARMSTRONG

8th November 1982