

019

Yes - immediate clarity  
not

Prime Minister

Agree that the first step is for you  
to speak to Lord Carrington?

Ref. A07596

MR. WHITMORE

No  
I don't want  
to sound  
the F.O.  
at meeting, we have a copy of  
Gerard's letter?  
MHW 23/2

MHW

With your minute of 19th February you sent me a copy of the letter which the Prime Minister had received from Mr. Christopher Gerard of the Overseas Development Administration.

2. I am afraid that the letter has the ring of truth about it, at any rate in essentials. I suspect that the Overseas Development Administration has a strong Departmental ethos, surviving from the time when it was a separate Department, and that that ethos and its consequences have persisted since May 1979, because the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary hardly has time to concern himself in great detail with the affairs of the ODA and the Minister for Overseas Development has not in practice made much impact on it.

3. So I am sure that this letter ought to be followed up vigorously. At the same time it has to be said that Mr. Gerard has the reputation for being "a bit of an oddball", and the handling of the matter calls for a degree of caution as well as of vigour.

4. Firstly, I do not think that the Prime Minister should make any move without showing Lord Carrington the letter and discussing with him what should be done about it. It is his Department, and he will react very badly if we start operating in his area without his agreement.

5. I think that the letter will call for some kind of inquiry, to be commissioned by the Prime Minister and the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary. This might be put into the hands of Sir Derek Rayner and Sir Peter Preston. We could provide necessary support from the Rayner Unit and the Machinery of Government Division of the MPO (who will also be involved in the review of organisation and grading at the top of the FCO/ODA about which I reported in my minute of 18th February (Ref. A07540) about the extension of Sir Peter Preston's term of employment).

6. In the handling of all this we shall need to bear in mind that the ODA is also likely to come under fire when the report of the Crown Agents Tribunal is published.

RA

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

23rd February, 1982

CLIVE

?? copy Robert Armstrong

We seem to have lost  
your minute of 19 Feb  
to which RTA refers in  
his of 23 Feb.

no, I don't  
know or  
need  
either  
min

I don't  
have it. W  
may have  
the M.