

STAFF IN CONFIDENCE



SIR MICHAEL PALLISER'S  
FILE COPY

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

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*File 3/3*  
*Re copy to PS/M + Cuce*  
*(cleared with Secretary*  
*of State in Salisbury)*

Sir Nicholas Henderson GCMG  
WASHINGTON

1 March 1982

*Dear Nick,*

YOUR SUCCESSOR

1. As you know, we have been consciously taking things in slow order over seeking agrément for Tony Parsons. I have particularly wanted to meet your wish not to have too long a period as a 'lame duck' - a very reasonable wish when your successor is already on your patch. But there have now been some pretty confident articles in the press (the Sunday Times this weekend was very accurate) to the effect that Tony Parsons is to succeed you, and stories are bound now to proliferate. In the circumstances, I think we should now agree on a firm timescale, and a slightly earlier one than we had originally envisaged.
2. What I would like to suggest is that you should seek agrément for Tony around 19 March. That is the date on which he is due to return to this country to begin a briefing and lecture tour. On the assumption that the Americans take 2 or 3 weeks over granting agrément, we should be in a position to make an announcement around 22 April. By then, Tony will have returned to New York, and will be beginning his farewell rounds. He would thus be your announced successor for some 2 weeks before he quits New York on 7 or 8 May.
3. Before I set all this in motion, I should be grateful to know whether you, and Tony Parsons to whom I am copying this letter, agree that this scenario makes sense.

*Yours ever,*

*Michael*

Michael Palliser

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9 March 1982

Sir Nicholas Henderson GCMG  
WASHINGTON

SIR MICHAEL PALLISER

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*See Nick*

YOUR SUCCESSOR

Many thanks for your letter of 4 March. I am sorry this whole business is causing so much difficulty all round. I am glad that you will be discussing it with Tony Parsons in New York this week, and I hope that you will have been able to resolve matters between you. Perhaps I could reserve my last word on the matter until I hear what has been agreed between the two of you.

*See*

*Michael*

Michael Palliser

cc: Sir Anthony Parsons GCMG MVO MC  
NEW YORK

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