



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

MR SPARROW

CENTRAL POLICY REVIEW STAFF

This minute records the conclusions of the meeting which the Prime Minister had this morning with Sir Robert Armstrong and you about the role and staffing of the CPRS:-

- i) The Prime Minister agreed that the CPRS should go ahead with the higher education study proposed in your minute of 16 November, which was supported by the Secretary of State for Education and Science and Mr Waldegrave.
- ii) The Prime Minister concluded that the CPRS should not proceed with the study on the unions about which you had expressed reservations in your minute of 25 November.
- iii) The Prime Minister would hold a small meeting of Ministers, similar to the meeting which she held on the unemployment study, to consider what action should be taken on the CPRS report on state monopolies: please will you let me know whether you would wish the note attached to your minute of 12 November to Mr Scholar to be circulated as a basis for that meeting, and whether you would like to cover it with a note pulling out specific issues for Ministerial decisions on future action.
- iv) The Prime Minister said that she did not herself endorse some of the recommendations in the report on the black economy, particularly those which would increase the administration of the tax system, but agreed that you should discuss the report with the responsible Ministers in the Treasury and DHSS and report to her what was happening about them.
- v) The CPRS should devote more effort to briefing on papers coming forward from day to day, as recommended in your minute of 25 November, and to "fire-fighting" activities, particularly on industrial questions.
- vi) The Prime Minister asked Sir Robert Armstrong and you to prepare plans for the future staffing of CPRS, in the light of these conclusions about the future work programme, and to submit them to her: the Prime Minister

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expects that these will lead to a reduction of the current numbers in the CPRS.

- vii) The Prime Minister agreed to your suggestion that you should have more frequent meetings with her.

I am minuting Sir Robert Armstrong separately about the decisions made by the Prime Minister about senior appointments at the conclusion of the meeting.

I am copying this minute to Sir Robert Armstrong.

F.R.B.

30 November 1982

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NOTE FOR THE RECORD

ROLE OF THE CENTRAL POLICY REVIEW STAFF

This note records points made at the Prime Minister's meeting on 30 November with Sir Robert Armstrong and Mr Sparrow about the role of the CPRS.

The Prime Minister said that she was not happy at present about the way in which the CPRS was working. Their recent reports had been too general and not based on sufficient research: she found it difficult to derive specific points for practical action from them. She thought that the CPRS was at present too big for the role it performed.

Mr Sparrow said that the role and staffing of the CPRS were very much as he had inherited them. He agreed that the CPRS was too large and top-heavy at present: once the work programme for the CPRS had been clarified he would want to think further about its staffing. He felt that the CPRS had become involved in more major studies than was desirable or had been the intention when it was first set up. He pointed out, however, that the CPRS were involved in a large amount of work which the Prime Minister did not see directly. He suggested that there should be a clearer idea of the benefits to be derived from such studies before they were launched and that the CPRS should devote more of its efforts to briefing on the flow of papers coming forward for Ministerial decision day by day.

The Prime Minister said at the end of the meeting that she would want to think again about the CPRS following the next election and would want to consider whether it should be abolished in its present form and replaced by some expansion of the policy unit in No 10.

1 December 1982

F.R.B.

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

CENTRAL POLICY REVIEW STAFF

I attach a copy of the minute which I have sent to Mr Sparrow recording the conclusions of today's discussion on the role of the CPRS.

There is one point, which I think that I should record separately in this note to you, although the Prime Minister made it in Mr Sparrow's hearing. That is that she will want to review again the role of the CPRS if she remains in office after the next General Election.

F.R.B.

30 November 1982

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