

Confidential Filing

Meeting with Sir Douglas Hague CBE
on Research Councils.

PRIME MINISTER

DECEMBER 1984

Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date
14.1.85. 4.2.85 6.2.85							
PREM 19/1608							

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JD



APPES

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

Sir Robin Nicholson

Research Council Appointments

You were present when Sir Douglas Hague came to see the Prime Minister yesterday about the Research Councils. The discussion was largely of a general nature, but I should record what was said about appointments.

Sir Douglas argued that there were too few people on the Research Councils who were prepared to face up to choices between differing priorities, and to contain the demands of research on the taxpayer by managing within a constant budget. The Prime Minister agreed, but at the same time expressed concern about the apparent shortage of people with the requisite skills, attitudes and time to serve on the Councils. There followed a discussion of possible names - those mentioned with approval by the Prime Minister included:

- Jack Butterworth (? a possible successor to the
Chairman of SERC)
- Professor Battacharya (Warwick)
- Brian Griffiths
- Sir Kenneth Berrill
- Owen Green
- Sir Christopher Laidlaw
- Sir Ronald Halstead

- Sir Leonard Wolfson) possible one day a week
- Lord McAlpine) chairmen

- Bob Young) ex CPRS and No.10 Policy Unit.
- David Pascall) Now with Vickers and BP
-) respectively.

Sir Douglas Hague said that he himself would be willing to take on the chairmanship of SERC. The Prime Minister noted this offer with gratitude, but pointed out that the next chairman might well have to be a scientist.

ECU

In more general discussion, the Prime Minister expressed particular interest in the possibilities for research into the economics of job creation (including a comparative study with the United States), and the "black economy".

I should be grateful if this minute could be retained on your personal files, and not given any distribution.

6 February, 1985.



W.0102

4 February 1985

PRIME MINISTER

MEETING WITH SIR DOUGLAS HAGUE - 5 FEBRUARY

Sir Douglas Hague will wish to raise two topics with you: first, progress in moving his own research council, ESRC, towards doing useful research; secondly, his concern at the failures of management of the four councils involved in the natural sciences, ie SERC, NERC, MRC and AFRC.

2. On his own council's programme, Sir Douglas will stress the shift towards trying to understand change in society and the acceptance or non-acceptance of change, for example the council's work on the public acceptance of new technology.

3. On the second point, Sir Douglas believes that at present the research councils are not 'managed' in the sense of the word which a business school would understand. This has implications both for the cost of their research and their selection of research fields which should be encouraged. With three of the four chairmanships of these research councils about to fall vacant, his views are important in selecting the new chairmen.

ROBIN NICHOLSON
Chief Scientific Adviser



AK

pps

pac.

Dmb
15/1

10 DOWNING STREET

PRIME MINISTER

CF

For meeting at
1700 on 5 Feb
pac.

You have agreed to see
Sir Douglas Hague later in
the month to talk about the
Research Councils.

D
16/1

Would you like to see him with
a private secretary only?
Or - if Sir Douglas agrees -
would you find it helpful to
have Robin Nicholson there
as well?

Yes not

Dmb

01-353
5252 x 282

D. BARCLAY

14 January, 1985



10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

4 January, 1985

W7

7,150 on 28 Jan
W
1715 on 11 Feb
1700 on 5 Feb.

Dear Douglas.

Many thanks for your letter of 20 December. I should greatly value a talk with you about the Research Councils, and I have asked my office to make contact after you return from India to arrange a time.

With every good wish for the New Year.

Yours

Raymond

Professor Sir Douglas Hague, CBE

W7

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Church Hanborough
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RQ1

20. 12. 24

Jess Margaret

I should be most grateful if you could spare time for a short, quiet chat about Research Councils. I am not seeking more money - rather the reverse. And I have told no one, even Keith, that I am approaching you.

But I feel I now know enough about the Research

Council system to have useful
things to say to you.

I am off on an official
visit to India until the
January, dont would find
time after the 9th to visit
you.

Every good wish
for a really successful 1985.

Yours
Duyler

