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Ref. A08119

MR. WHITMORE

It was agreed at a meeting of OD(SA) last week that Sir Michael Palliser, who retired as Permanent Under Secretary in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on Thursday 8th April, should be retained as a Special Adviser in the Cabinet Office during the Falkland Islands crisis. It was agreed that he should be based in the Cabinet Office and should attend future meetings of OD(SA).

2. Sir Michael Palliser has taken up his post as Special Adviser today. We have agreed the broad lines of the work which he has to put in hand. He will not be responsible for any day-to-day management or executive functions, which are the business of the Departments concerned, but he will be available for consultation as required on particular political, diplomatic or military aspects of the handling of the crisis. He will be responsible for clearing the output of the South Atlantic Presentation Unit: he will either authorise its release (consulting Departments and me as appropriate) or when he considers it necessary seek the Prime Minister's approval. He will also consider the longer-term alternatives available to the Government both for the current negotiations being conducted by the United States Secretary of State and also for the constitutional status of the Falkland Islands once the Argentine troops have withdrawn and British administration is restored.

3. I see no need for any public announcement of Sir Michael Palliser's appointment. It will become known to the Departments and officials concerned in the course of day-to-day business and as a result of work which is commissioned of him by Ministers. But there is a risk that news of his appointment might leak, and we should provide ourselves in advance with a line to take, should we be asked about the appointment by the press. There is no reason to conceal the appointment, and I suggest that, if there are enquiries, the No. 10 Press Office should confirm that, following his retirement, Sir Michael Palliser has been asked by the Prime Minister to serve as a Special Adviser in the Cabinet Office during the Falklands crisis. His appointment will be for as long as

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Ministers consider necessary, but will clearly be related to the course of events. If asked what tasks he will be fulfilling as a Special Adviser, the Press Office should refuse to be drawn, but could say that he will take on any work which Ministers consider it would be appropriate for him to do.

4. The Prime Minister may like to welcome Sir Michael Palliser at tomorrow morning's meeting of OD(SA), and to tell the Sub-Committee what his remit is, on the lines of paragraph 2 above.

REA

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

14th April, 1982

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