

AUTHORITY OF GOVERNMENT

Note on the meeting held  
in Lord Carrington's Room  
at 11.30 am on Tuesday  
16th December 1975

Present:	Lord Carrington (in the Chair) Lord Jellicoe, Mr. Peyton, Mr. Younger, Mr. Hardy, and Mr. Forman (Secretary)	Apologies: Mr. Gilmour, Mr. Waldegrave, and Mr. Sumption
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1) Resumé of meetings so far

The Secretary ran through the progress which the Group had made thus far.

2) Ideas for future meetings

Among the ideas and people suggested for future meetings were the following:

- That the Group should take further oral evidence from senior people with direct knowledge of the problems faced by key industries in an emergency - specifically: the Gas industry, the Sewage Treatment industry, the Docks, the National Coal Board, the Railways and the CEEB.

- That the Group should invite Mr. Johnson-Smith to an early meeting in the New Year to discuss the problems involved in getting the Government's case across in an emergency situation.

- That the Group should invite Lord Watkinson to come and talk about industry's possible contribution in an emergency; and Sir Leonard Neal to come and talk about the central problems of seeking and securing trade union cooperation with Government - especially in the light of West German experience.

- That the Group should invite Sir Robert Mark to come and talk about the problems of the police in emergency circumstances when they had occasionally to decide not to enforce the letter of the law in the interest of keeping the peace.

- That the Group should further investigate the possibilities of making (better) use of the secret information already available to Government through the auspices of the Special Branch.

- That the Group should invite a suitable retired senior civil servant (e.g. Lord Armstrong) to come and talk about the problems from the Civil Service point of view, especially with regard to the possibilities for volunteer effort in an emergency.

- That the Group should bear in mind and try to suggest some positive ideas on the wider, more intangible questions, e.g. how to make politicians in Government politically more effective in securing and retaining public support for difficult or unpopular decisions both in advance of any emergency and during it; or how to cope with the apparent slippage of power away from Government/Parliament towards unrepresentative and increasingly powerful interest groups, e.g. some key trade unions.

3) Next Meeting

It was agreed that this would probably take place during the week of the 19th January 1976, subject to precise confirmation by the Secretary of time, place and date.