

PRIME MINISTER

Meeting with Special Advisers on Monday, 16th January, 6.30-7.30 pm

1. I attach a list of special advisers (with the Minister to whom they are attached) all of whom are coming. (Flag A)
2. There are three ways you could conduct the meeting.
 - (a) My original suggestion of serving drinks straight away, you making initial opening remarks and then mingling and chatting to them individually.
 - (b) Making your remarks towards the end of the meeting rather than the beginning.
 - (c) Making your remarks half way through the meeting and then sitting down as a group to have a more coherent discussion.

Michael Alison and I would recommend (c). Do you agree - or do you want to play it by ear on the day?

Yes

3. I attach a speaking note for you. (Flag B)
4. Also present will be John Redwood, and Peter Cropper who works closely with special advisers although he is not formally one himself. You ought to be aware that Peter is a little concerned about the run-down of the Research Department since the election. However, he feels this would be quite the wrong place to have the role of the Research Department raised or discussed.
5. I attach a private note (the sealed envelope - Flag D) on special advisers.
6. I also attach the original note I put in to you. (Flag C)
No other Ministers are attending.

Siene
Stephen Sherbourne

13th January 1984

B

B

Speaking Note for Informal Remarks to Special Advisers.

1. First of all, this meeting gives me the chance personally to thank many of you for the sterling work you did at Central Office during the Election. One or two of you were fighting as candidates and therefore saw the sharp end of politics.
2. All of us, including myself, owe our jobs to the votes of the electorate and to our people in the constituencies who worked for those votes. We may have the privilege of being in Government but we must never become snooty about the Party in the country or the Party organisation. Indeed, one of your jobs is to improve co-ordination between Government and the Party.
3. I attach the greatest importance to getting the Government's message across to the Party and the public. Before I appear on a television or radio interview, I always find the time to prepare carefully for it. If you want to be radical, you need to bring the people with you.
4. However, detailed your work becomes, it is important not to lose sight of our political objectives and why we were voted into office: To reduce the power of the State and increase the freedom of the citizen. / To increase personal responsibility for individuals and their families. / To bring about the revival of enterprise. / If we can achieve that, and we have already begun, we will have changed the course of British history. I am not in Government because I like the chauffeur driven cars and red boxes and the trappings of office. And not should you. Our job is to make life better for our fellow citizens to whom we owe our jobs.

Spive

SS

13.1.84

10. 11.
PRIME MINISTER

Meeting with Special Advisers: next Monday, 16 January at 6.30 pm

I have been thinking about this meeting. I would like to suggest that we do not sit round in a circle, even to begin with. I fear that, if we do, it will become a rather formal and stiff event, with ~~me~~^{many} not speaking until spoken to, and you would end up doing most of the talking.

I would prefer to make it informal. Drinks should be served straightaway, with people standing. Early on, I would suggest you make a few introductory, welcoming remarks. A good theme would be to remind them of the full programme of work which the Government has set itself for this Parliament, to emphasise our political objectives and to underline the great enterprise on which we are embarked in bringing about the revival of an enterprising Britain. Then, people could break up into small groups and you could circulate among them: they would, I think, find it easier to talk to you in this way.

If you agree with this approach, it might help if we had one or two outsiders present. I am thinking of people like Geoffrey Howe, Leon Brittan, Nigel Lawson and perhaps Lord Cockfield (if of course they can come - I know it's short notice). I hope Michael Alison will be present. You may have other names.

*two
long
stet-
day*

My objective is to ensure that both you and they get the most out of this meeting, and that they leave with renewed enthusiasm.

Do you agree with this way of handling the meeting?

(I will of course do you a note for the meeting, with a list of names, for your weekend box)

Steven
Stephen
11 Jan. 84

mt

Special Advisers attending meeting

Edward Bickham - The Rt. Hon. James Prior

Chris Butler - The Rt. Hon. Nicholas Edwards

Michael Dobbs - The Rt. Hon. Norman Tebbit(2 days)
and Saatchi & Saatchi (3 days)

Robin Harris - The Rt. Hon. Leon Brittan
(formally at the Treasury.
Fought Tooting at the last
election.)

John Houston - The Rt. Hon. Sir Geoffrey Howe
(formally with Christopher
Tugendhat in the Commission)

Rodney Lord - Treasury Ministers
(formally a journalist)

John Redwood - Policy Unit No 10

Chris Mockler - The Rt. Hon. Patrick Jenkin

Michael Portillo - The Rt. Hon. Nigel Lawson
(Originally with David Howell,
briefly with Cecil Parkinson
after the election. Fought
Birmingham, Perry Barr at the
last election)

Katherine Ramsay
(nee Marsh) - The Rt. Hon. Nicholas Ridley

Adam Ridley - Treasury Ministers

Stuart Sexton - The Rt. Hon. Sir Keith Joseph

Nick True - The Rt. Hon. Norman Fowler

Michael Webb - Political correspondence - No 10

Alison Ward - The Chief Whip

Personal Note on Special Advisers

I thought it might be helpful for you if I did a very personal note on special advisers.

You know most of them in varying degrees. The good ones are very good, albeit in their different ways eg: Michael Portillo, Robin Harris, Michael Dobbs and of course Adam Ridley. Some of the more recent ones are less effective for various reasons: some are just less able or they do not know their Minister well, or the Minister does not know how to use them, or they find life in the Department lonely. This last point is important. I think for example, Nick True in the DHSS, who is very bright, has difficulty with officials (as indeed do Ministers there, I think!). My own personal view is, and always has been, that there was an unseemly scramble to fill special advisers' jobs after the last election with the result that we have a bit of a mixed bag. But there is no doubt that those who are good do play an effective role in projecting Government policy. And special advisers do play a vital role in co-ordinating between Government and Party: they have a lot of time to give to this which their Ministers cannot ^{always}

At Cecil Parkinson's suggestion after the election I hold weekly meetings of special advisers for half an hour. No paper at all is issued. These meetings are still evolving but are proving useful in meeting the following objectives: co-ordination with the Research Department and Central Office; bouncing ideas off one another in terms of how to present Government policy; preventing special advisers becoming too isolated or marooned in their own Department and with their own subject matter. I am also initiating some work on Opposition Parties so that we can develop for you and other Ministers a strategy for dealing with Labour and the Alliance Parties.

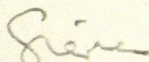
There is also the question of terms and conditions of employment. As I think you know, a proposal is coming to you to revise these, though most of the changes will affect special advisers appointed subsequently rather than those in situ. I have talked to David Wolfson about this and we have agreed that once the

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Personal Note on Special Advisers cont.

new arrangements have been agreed by you, we will then notify existing advisers only of those parts in the new general terms and conditions which affect them. I do not think that special advisers are aware that changes are going through and therefore, though possible, it is unlikely that anyone will raise this with you.

I enclose an envelope so that this particular note is returned sealed to me, which I think is probably sensible.



Stephen

13th January 1984

PRIME MINISTER

Amara
please arrange with
Mr Taylor for next Friday
Jan 27.
8 20/1

Meeting with Special Advisers

1. I am delighted we had last night's meeting which went down very well with advisers.

2. Would you like a repeat of this meeting, with you present, later this year? To do it in six months would coincide with the end of the Parliamentary session. It might be better to do it again in the Autumn either (a) before the Party Conference or (b) after the Conference and before the opening of Parliament. Do you have a preference?

That would be a bad idea

3. I continue to hold a weekly half hour meeting of special advisers; and Lord Whitelaw has asked that I feed into his Committee information from this network. We have difficulty in finding a room to accommodate us. It would be enormously helpful and more businesslike if we could meet in the Small Dining Room (the meeting would be at 8.45 am on Fridays) provided always that there is no clash with other arrangements.

X/

Would this meet with your agreement?

4. At last night's meeting, Michael Webb raised the question of your political correspondence. I am sorry he raised it then because it was the wrong forum. I have been looking carefully at ways we can improve the system, to make it more efficient and so expedite significantly the replies to letters. I have various ideas. You may find it helpful if I were to put these ideas to you shortly.

(Since writing this, you talked to Kenneth Baker who is taking an interest. See 19/1.)

Stephen

Stephen Sherbourne

17th January, 1984