

TO : KJ

FROM : AS

13.7.77

Territorial Army of Advisers

I met Arthur Seldon this morning to discuss the scope and techniques of a reserve army of advisors. (see my previous notes). We agreed that numbers needed would be several hundred, mainly but not exclusively economic. (We do not preclude the need for advisors in other spheres of activity, e.g. military, law and order, foreign affairs, counter-insurgency, or indeed information policy - we simply did not include them in our purview.)

The numbers needed would permit a team of not less than half a dozen to each senior minister. Norman (Lord Crowther) Hunt is of the view that any minister, not just one of cabinet rank, needs at least half a dozen competent specialist or senior specialist advisers, if he is not to have his tail twisted by the civil servants. We shall need a great many additional advisors, specialist

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or nontspecialist, to cover non-ministerial arms of government, e.g. the Government Actuary, Coal Board, Manpower Services Commission, and a host of other such organisations which have played their part in running the country into the ground.

Arthur agrees that they could be slotted into their prospective roles well in advance of our taking office, and that unless this is done the civil servants will make hay at our expense.

We agree that many of these people should be taken on as temporary civil servants, but that others will have to be "carried" by their firms, paid for out of special funds which we shall need to earmark soon, or engage as part-time consultants.

We agreed that we do not ask for a commitment to the Conservative Party but rather to certain shared principles, in fact a commitment to Britain and economics in that order. We believe that the teams should be balanced between technical specialists, men with political nous, administrators.

Arthur is confident that we can find them. He is willing to help identify and in some cases recruit them, if asked to do so. He confirms my view that many academics and better businessmen would welcome attention from you and Margaret as assurance that the next government would break with the approach exemplified by Heath and Barber, with such disastrous results. As you know, we have yet to convince many well-wishers that this is the case. Our recruitment could help to do so.

As for the problem of what they would do if we lost the next election, they can be trusted to consider that for themselves; those who are deterred will clearly not enlist as prospective full-time advisers, but will settle for consultancies, paid or otherwise. But in any case, if we lose, the future will be bleak for all concerned, whether they join or not.