

Conservative Research Department

Mr. Sherbourne

32 Smith Square Westminster SW1P 3HH

Telephone 01-222 9511

Director: ROBIN HARRIS

PERSONAL

18th June 1985

Dear Sherb

THE SPECIAL ADVISER NETWORK AND OTHER MATTERS

Thank you for sending me a copy of your letter of 11th June. I have also seen and, as you know, initially responded to the points in John Houston's letter of 31st May.

I am not convinced that the sort of meeting which your letter suggests is really necessary. You and others can, of course, use the CRD Conference Room on the dates (or at least the last three of them) mentioned in your letter. I cannot myself promise to be present.

There are essentially three points which have been raised.

First, prior notification between Special Advisers of forthcoming announcements and events. I do not believe that this is a practical proposition. Bernard Ingham works with the Departmental Press Officers to compile a forward diary. But I do not think that he could sensibly be asked to have such a document circulated as a matter of course. In practice, galling as it may seem, it will be for individual Special Advisers to learn of these things by keeping in personal contact with one another. I cannot remember any difficulties which I encountered on this score either at the Treasury or the Home Office.

Secondly, circulation of briefing. Again, it does not seem to me to be a practical proposition for Special Advisers to send each other briefing on random matters of interest. The volume of paper would be too great. Special Advisers do now receive all Research Department briefs - Restricted and Unrestricted - and this should ensure that the notes which Special Advisers have been asked by No. 10 to provide on particular announcements and events are seen by all.

Finally, there are the 'Fact Sheets'. The organisation of such an exercise should and will come from the Research Department: though I shall ask for the co-operation of Special Advisers in this. However, I do not envisage such an exercise until the autumn, when I will notify Special Advisers and others what is planned.

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I do hope that Special Advisers will not, for all our sakes, make the best the enemy of the good: the telephone is, after all, always available for those who wish to use it ...

I am sending this letter to those who received yours.

Yours ever,

Robin

ROBIN HARRIS

Stuart Sexton, Esq.,
Department of Education and Science
Elizabeth House,
York Road,
London SE1 7EH

RH/JLS