

Personal

PRIME MINISTER

I Introduction

Before I leave for my holiday I thought I would set out my own very personal views about the current political scene and what needs to be done. I have therefore typed this myself.

The objective is to win you a third term as Prime Minister. It will not be easy: no Prime Minister has won three successive General Elections this century; and with the influence of television, people get bored more quickly and seem to want a change. But the Government has a tremendous amount going for it; you are giving Britain the strong leadership with no false promises for which people yearned during the 60s and 70s. And in my view, you remain the Party's strongest asset because you personify the strength and virtues of the Government. The Government is doing so much of what people want on trade unions, home and share ownership, denationalisation, anti-hooliganism and anti-drugs and, as we know, far from cutting the ~~social~~ services. So the problem is really poor public relations and that is the theme of this note.

What should be done? First, have the right team.

II Re-Shuffle

✓ You need a new Chairman with authority and PR skills - I still see Norman Tebbit as the best. (failure to appoint a new Chairman, apart from anything else, would damage you by casting doubt on your political touch.)



Norman Tebbit would I think need a good Deputy Chairman. Jeffrey Archer is talked about a lot, and he is very popular with the Party activists. But he would reinforce Norman Tebbit's strong assets, PR.

What is needed is a strong No. 2 to help run Central Office as a Chief Executive. Morale remains low. Vice-Chairmen who are MPs have not the time. Therefore what about appointing Lord Young as Deputy Chairman? He would be excellent on both the admin side and the PR (he comes over well on television and does not sound like a politician).

Cecil Parkinson: I am one of his real fans. His return to the Cabinet would be popular with men but unpopular with many women in the Party. And the real fear is that there would be further revelations from Sarah Keays and this time they would rebound on you and not just him. I fear the reappointment of CP would be a high risk strategy.

Chief Whip: John Wakeham is more important here than anywhere else. The Parliamentary Party is going to be very restless over the next session and many of the new members' nerves will begin to crack. John Wakeham's steady hand is needed.

Chancellor of the Exchequer: Clearly unmoveable, in my view and to do so would damage the whole Government's standing by undermining your economic strategy. But NL is so important a member of the Government, he does need some confident who can advise him regularly on PR.



Assuming that the three top jobs of the Government remain unchanged, it is imperative to bring a number of fresh new faces in. To make just one or two changes in the Cabinet will really look like tinkering and will not be enough. But I know it will be painful.

"Old" faces to go? Patrick Jenkin, Peter Rees, Keith Joseph, Tom King, Michael Jopling (all these could go with no hint of "Night of the long knives").

New faces? They must be good communicators. Ken Baker, John Moore, John MacGregor, Tony Newton, Chris Patten, Ken Clarke.

What jobs could they do? It partly depends on who takes over at DTI. If it is George Younger then Malcolm Rifkind will have to go to Scotland. But if it is Norman Fowler, then Tony Newton could take over the DHSS (Norman Fowler or Tony Newton would have to stay at DHSS for continuity in the social security review).

If George Younger goes to DTI, Norman Fowler could go to DOE. But if not Ken Baker could <sup>take over</sup> go to DOE himself; or do Employment, or Education.

Or, Chris Patten could do Employment or Education.

John MacGregor to take over at Agriculture.

John Moore to be Chief Secretary (but perhaps a "dry" is wasted there. Any Chief Secretary has to live within the figure he is given and what matters is being effective).

**BUT:**  
So, if Norman Fowler moves and you don't want to promote Tony Newton:



Michael Heseltine could go to DHSS (good communicator and keen to run departments effectively);

Peter Walker to Defence (where he is at one with you, a good communicator on a critical issue though you may be worried about spending there.) *and;*

John Moore to Energy.


### III How to improve Government's PR

I would have the new Chairman replace Lord Whitelaw as Minister <sup>specifically</sup> responsible for communications. (Lord Whitelaw, being in the House of Lords is less in touch and sees things in a different perspective) and a new Chairman would have the weight of Lord Whitelaw. *(though Bernard would not like this proposal.)*

Just as all Cabinet papers have to specify financial implications, they should also set out the Minister's view about how to present the policy and what problems he expects. Every Minister should be told that he must notify the Chairman with any announcement or policy where he expects difficulty.

You should hold every Monday morning a re-vamped Media meeting (but not called that because it must be more effective than it has been. Those present should be Nigel Wicks, Bernard, myself, the head of the policy unit and the Chairman. Before us should be a paper from Bernard setting out the expected events of the week. The task of the meeting should be to identify action if any to be taken on each item.

#### IV Backbenchers

 You need far better intelligence of backbenchers' views than you ~~are currently getting.~~ And backbenchers need to be reassured that there is an effective channel of communication to you. I see a troublesome session ahead with the parliamentary party and this is therefore crucial.

#### V Election Strategy

The new Chairman should set in ~~hand~~<sup>hand</sup> plans with the advertising agency we plan to use in the election for a half day's presentation at Chequers for you and a small number of your closest Ministers. The purpose of this would be to provide you with up to date polling information to help you plan the next two years, to identify the themes, to advise on how we can best sell our strengths, and determine strategy for attacking the various opposition parties. This should help establish clear guide-lines which could be in Ministers' minds right up to the next election.

You will also then need to set up a small manifesto drafting team, in my view under the day to day control of the Chairman who should be master-minding the whole of the Government's PR strategy.

But throughout all of this the Party will need continuing professional advice from, let us say, Saatchi and Saatchi.



VI Yourself

I believe that for the next year or so, you should do very few formal political television interviews eg. Panorama etc. Far better to appear on the news in short interviews, <sup>and on</sup> ~~such as~~ Jimmy Young type programmes with Radio 2 type audiences, interviews with women's magazines and leisure magazines, all of which allow you to reach out to a wide non-political audience.

On visits, I have already in hand proposals to change the format, as far as we can, from next year so you are seen doing more "spontaneous" things, are seen with successes, eg. new hospitals, roads, modern developments (and we must ask Ministers to come forward with suggestions of this kind). You should also be seen much more with people and children where you come over marvellously and which interests the public much more than the traditional factory visits.

*Steven.*

STEPHEN SHERBOURNE

22.8.85

PS I have not copied this note to anybody else because it is so personal.