

SECRET AND PERSONAL

PRIME MINISTER

TOWARDS THE NEXT ELECTION

Following our meeting with you to discuss our two papers, we have now been able to discuss our ideas with John Wakeham and Kenneth Baker. The meeting was useful and we found ourselves in total agreement on how we should best proceed. As a result, we would therefore like to recommend that:

- 1 You should now write to all Departmental Cabinet Ministers requesting that they should prepare for you a brief summarising what policy work is being done in their Departments and setting out what policies will be ready for implementation over the next five years.

- 2 In your speech to the 1922 Committee on 12 July, you should announce that you will be inviting Ministers to set up Policy Groups in the autumn covering their own areas. Minister will have discretion to select the Members of the Policy Groups, although they should be encouraged to ask all the officers of the relevant backbench committee to participate. This will ensure that the Parliamentary Party is fully involved in the exercise. We do not believe that it would be a good idea to have policy work done by backbench committees separate from the Ministerial groups as this is likely to lead to conflicting recommendations and press stories about disunity.

The Ministerial Policy Groups should be asked to report direct to you by early in the New Year; the bulk of the work should be completed by Christmas.

- 3 A Committee of Senior Ministers chaired by you should be established to oversee the policy work. Membership should consist of: Lord President, Chancellor of the Exchequer, Foreign Secretary, Home Secretary, Secretary of State for Energy, Party Chairman and Brian Griffiths. Robin Harris and John Whittingdale would act as Secretaries. The Committee need meet less frequently than its equivalent in 1986, perhaps once a month. It would be helpful to have its first meeting before the Party Conference to discuss the objectives of the Conference and how to take them forward in the following months.

The strategy outlined above is designed to ensure that the essential preparatory work has been done so that the option of a June 1991 election is available to us if the time looks right, without building up excessive pressure for an early election. It would have the additional benefit of presenting an image of a united and purposeful Government thinking about policies for the 1990s.

Would you like us to fix up a meeting for you to discuss these proposals with John Wakeham and Kenneth Baker?

JOHN WHITTINGDALE

20 June 1990



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

SECRET + PERSONAL.

21st June, 1990

Dear John,

Following our discussion on Tuesday, I have drafted the enclosed minute which I hope accurately summarises our conclusions.

I would like to put this into the Prime Minister's box this weekend and it would thus be very helpful if you could let me have any comments before then.

Yours,

John
/

JOHN WHITTINGDALE
Political Secretary

The Rt Hon John Wakeham MP

+cc Kenneth Baker.



CONSERVATIVE

SECRET AND PERSONAL

21st June 1990

Dear John,

The Chairman has asked me to thank you very much for your letter of 21st June.

... I am returning your draft minute with the Chairman's minor amendments.

*Yours ever,
John*

John Gardiner
Private Secretary

John Whittingdale, Esq.,
Political Secretary,
10 Downing Street,
LONDON SW1A 2AA.

**THE RIGHT HON. KENNETH BAKER MP
CHAIRMAN OF THE PARTY**

SECRET AND PERSONAL

BU - minor changes
Frank

PRIME MINISTER

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The Ministerial Policy Groups should be asked to report direct to you ~~by~~ early in the New Year; ~~the bulk of the work should be completed by Christmas.~~

- 3 A Committee of Senior Ministers chaired by you should be established to oversee the policy work. Membership should consist of: Lord President, Chancellor of the Exchequer, Foreign Secretary, Home Secretary, Secretary of State for Energy, Party Chairman and Brian Griffiths. Robin Harris and John Whittingdale would act as Secretaries. The Committee ~~need~~ ^{meet} ~~meet~~ ^{as} ~~less~~ frequently than its equivalent in 1986, perhaps once a month. It would be helpful to have its first meeting before the Party Conference to discuss the objectives of the Conference and how to take them forward in the following months.

The strategy outlined above is designed to ensure that the essential preparatory work has been done so that the option of a June 1991 election is available to us if the time looks right, without building up excessive pressure for an early election. It would have the additional benefit of presenting an image of a united and purposeful Government thinking about policies for the 1990s.

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JOHN WHITTINGDALE

20 June 1990

John/Simply drafting points to make the second
sentence slightly better. BZ. (the rest is excellent)

SECRET AND PERSONAL

found ourselves
in total agreement

PRIME MINISTER

TOWARDS THE NEXT ELECTION

Following our meeting with you to discuss our two papers, we have now been able to discuss our ideas with John Wakeham and Kenneth Baker. ~~As a result, we are now all agreed on how we believe we should best proceed.~~ ^{The meeting was useful and we ended up with} We therefore recommend ^{that} ~~that~~ ^{we should} ~~we should~~ ^{proceed} ~~proceed~~ ^{in the following way:}

- 1 You should now write to all Departmental Cabinet Ministers requesting that they should prepare for you a brief summarising what forward policy work is being done in their Departments and setting out what policies will be ready for implementation over the next five years.
- 2 In your speech to the 1922 Committee on 12 July, you should announce that you will be inviting Ministers to set up Policy Groups in the autumn covering their own areas. Minister will have discretion to select the Members of the Policy Groups, although they should be encouraged to ask all the officers of the relevant backbench committee to participate. This will ensure that the Parliamentary Party is fully involved in the exercise.

We do not believe that it would be a good idea to have policy work done by backbench committees separate from the Ministerial groups as this is likely to lead to conflicting recommendations and press stories about disunity. The Ministerial ^{Policy} Groups should be asked to report direct to you by early in the New Year; the bulk of the work should be completed by Christmas.

- 3 A ~~Strategy~~ Committee of Senior Ministers chaired by you should be established to oversee the policy work. Membership should consist of: Lord President, Chancellor of the Exchequer, Foreign Secretary, Home Secretary, Secretary of State for Energy, Party Chairman and Brian Griffiths. Robin Harris and John Whittingdale would act as Secretaries. The Committee need meet less frequently than its equivalent in 1986, perhaps once a month. It would be helpful to have its first meeting before the Party Conference to discuss the objectives of the Conference and how to take them forward in the following months.

The strategy outlined above is designed to ensure that the essential preparatory work has been done so that the option of a June 1991 election is available to us if the time looks right. ~~(We will need to take care to emphasise that it does not mean that there is going to be a June election).~~ ^{would} It ~~will~~ have the additional benefit of presenting an image of a united and purposeful Government thinking about policies for the 1990s.

Would you like us to fix up a meeting ^{for you} to discuss these proposals with John Wakeham and Kenneth Baker?

AL

without building up excessive pressure for an early election.

AP JOHN WHITTINGDALE
20 June 1990

SECRET AND PERSONAL

MR BAKER
MR WAKEHAM

cc Professor Griffiths
Mr Harris

ELECTION PREPARATIONS

You should be aware that Brian Griffiths, Robin Harris, Mark Lennox-Boyd and I discussed with the Prime Minister just before Whitsun the formation of Policy Groups and a Strategy Group. I also produced the attached note summarising the procedure followed last time: as you will see, if we were to follow the same timetable, this would require a Strategy Group to be established now in order to be ready for a 1991 election.

As you will have gathered, the Prime Minister accepted that Departmental Ministers should chair Policy Groups, but her main concern was that backbenchers be involved through the backbench committees. We very much agree that there are two separate exercises here: policy work and involving the Party and MPs. We had therefore thought of setting up Policy Groups chaired by Departmental Ministers but with a membership of outside experts (CPS, IEA etc) to do the radical thinking and asking backbench committees (plus perhaps the National Union) to prepare separate papers in order to ensure that all interested parties were involved.

The Prime Minister is keen that Ministers begin to think about the longer-term. She is therefore intending to ask all Cabinet Ministers to let her have a note setting out what departmental policy work is likely to come to fruition in the next eighteen months and what thought is being given to policies for the next five years.

We are intending to meet with the Prime Minister again shortly to discuss how to proceed. It would be very helpful if we could have a talk before then.

JOHN WHITTINGDALE

4 June 1990

PROFESSOR GRIFFITHS
MR HARRIS

STRATEGY GROUP AND POLICY GROUPS

I thought it might be useful to summarise the procedure followed last time with the sequence of events.

The Strategy Group met on Monday mornings at 12.00. The meeting was followed by a lunch to which all members were invited, together with any Ministers who had attended the preceding meeting for a discussion on their subject. The Strategy Group comprised: Prime Minister, Lord President, Foreign Secretary, Home Secretary, Chancellor, Party Chairman and the Chief Whip. Brian Griffiths and Michael Alison attended as observers and the Secretaries were Stephen Sherbourne and Robin Harris. No civil servants were present.

23rd June 1986: First meeting. Preliminary agreement that Policy Groups be set up to report by Christmas on themes and policy for a third term. Commissioning of a paper on future Parliamentary programme and influence on a General Election. Report on opinion research. Commissioning of a paper for next meeting on themes for the Party Conference and Manifesto. Discussion of Government's public relations. Discussion of topics for PR campaigns over the summer recess. Report from Chairman on CCO's preparedness for a general election.

30th June 1986: Agreement to set up system for monitoring media for bias and misrepresentation. Discussion of paper by Robin Harris on themes and other contributions from members of the Group. Agreed that PM would prepare a paper setting out key themes, resulting from discussion. Discussion of forthcoming Parliamentary session and agreement to postpone water privatisation. Commissioning of a paper from the Chairman on publicity for the Summer Recess.

7th July 1986: Discussion of setting up of Policy Groups - agreement that PM write to Group Chairmen, setting out subjects, terms of reference and some possible names. Agreement to hold next meeting at CCO and to ask directors of departments to report on election preparations. Agreement on publicity arrangements during the recess. Report by the Chairman on plans for tackling the Opposition Parties. Report by Chairman on local by-election results.

(15th July - PM writes to Ministers inviting them to chair Policy Groups).

21st July 1986: Held at Central Office. Reports on critical seats (Jeffrey Archer), direct mail (Chris Lawson), Conservatives abroad, organisation (Tony Garner), local government elections in May (Hal Miller), campaigning and training (John Lacy), Party Conference (Harvey Thomas), press contacts (John Desborough), Research Department publications (Robin Harris), Party Election Broadcasts.

13th October 1986: Report by the Chairman on follow-up to the Party Conference. Agreement to set up co-ordinated exercise to undermine Labour promises. Discussion of specific policy areas to be considered at future meetings. Discussion of forthcoming events over the next fortnight.

27th October 1986: Discussion of forthcoming political events over the next fortnight. Discussion of how to keep up post-Conference momentum and highlight forward-looking elements within Autumn Statement and Queen's speech.

3rd November 1986: Discussion of forthcoming political events over the next fortnight. Discussion of Chairman's paper on BBC bias in coverage of US raid on Libya. Discussion of law and order policy and proposals for the manifesto.

17th November 1986: Discussion of reaction of BBC to Chairman's criticism. Review of next fortnight's political events. Discussion of Defence Policy and proposals for the manifesto (with George Young).

24th November 1986: Agreement that Chairmen of Policy Groups alone should retain copies of the reports. Discussion of Health policy and presentation (with Kenneth Clarke).

15th December 1986: Review of next fortnight's political events. Discussion of paper by Party Chairman on opinion research.

19th January 1987: Discussion of BTR/Pilkington. Discussion of City Fraud.

26th January 1987: Review of forthcoming events. Discussion of paper on "Presentation This Year" - agreement to produce weekly forward look at events over coming fortnight. Agreement that PM should write to Ministers asking for proposals for the Manifesto.

2nd February 1987: Review of forthcoming events. Discussion of presentation of Government's record in Scotland (with Malcolm Rifkind).

9th February 1987: Review of forthcoming events. Discussion of paper by Douglas Hurd on "Law and Order and the Manifesto".

16th February 1987: Review of forthcoming events. Discussion of papers on Inner Cities (with Nick Ridley, David Young, Kenneth Clarke).

2nd March 1987: Review of forthcoming events. Discussion of paper on Education policy (with Kenneth Baker, David Young).

9th March 1987: Review of forthcoming events. Discussion of papers on Farming and the Countryside (with Michael Jopling, Nick Ridley).

JOHN WHITTINGDALE

4 June 1990

PROFESSOR GRIFFITHS
MR HARRIS

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JW
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JOHN WHITTINGDALE

1 June 1990