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FROM: JACKIE JOHNSTON
Political Affairs Division
4 March 1999

cc PS/Mr Semple
Mr Ferguson
Mr McCusker
Mr Maccabe
Mr Barr (Transition Office)

MR G COSGRAVE
Transitional Office

PROPOSED TRAINING SEMINAR FOR POTENTIAL NORTHERN IRELAND MINISTERS

Issue: Agreeing the way forward for further development of the proposed training seminar for potential Northern Ireland ministers.

Timing: Will become very urgent if a breakthrough is achieved on forming the shadow Executive Committee. Stepping up preparatory work is therefore probably a wise move.

Recommendation:

- (i) That you, Mr Barr and myself meet next Wednesday as planned to discuss the attached draft seminar training programme.
- (ii) The Transition Office/Central Secretariat should form a project team to take forward the further development of the seminar. This will involve drafting detailed scripts for each of the sessions, co-ordination of the input from presenters and housekeeping arrangements for the seminar.

1. Attached for your and copy recipient consideration is a draft programme (or plan) for the training seminar for potential Northern Ireland ministers which the Secretary of State asked to be prepared some weeks ago. The draft programme sets out a design for 15 training sessions which I estimate should take between 2 to 4 days to deliver. It provides a comprehensive overview of the essential items to be covered by way of introducing the new ministers to government and those immediate issues, such as the Programme for

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Government, which they will need to consider. It also identifies ministers, officials, and others who might be asked to deliver the various sessions.

2. The next steps to move the development of the seminar forward are:

(1) Mr Semple to agree the attached draft with perhaps a further submission to the Secretary of State to inform her of our plans. His previous submission on this subject was dated 8 January 1999;

(2) setting up a project team;

(3) contacting officials, ministers and others identified as possible session leaders to brief them on the requirements for the scripts for each of the sessions.

I have managed to make contact with Jon Snow's agent (we agreed that he might be called upon to chair the seminar, a role which he performed at a recent British/Irish Association conference), Peter Bell has suggested Dr Paul Mitchell of QUB to fill the political scientist role and you are sourcing a Civil Service College tutor.

Signed: Jackie Johnston

J JOHNSTON
Tel: SH Ext 27087

PROPOSED TRAINING SEMINAR FOR POTENTIAL NORTHERN IRELAND MINISTERS

Session 1: Introduction by the First Minister (designate) and the Deputy First Minister (designate)

Key Topics: Welcome.
Setting the scene for the seminars.
A new system of devolved government for Northern Ireland
- sharing my/our personal vision.
Working together as an Executive Committee.

Description: This will be an important scene setting start to the seminars. It is likely that ministers (rather than potential nominees) will have been selected and the seminar may well be one of the first occasions when ministers will have met as a team. It will be important that the First and Deputy First Ministers are present, and perhaps participate in most of the seminar, in order to take ownership of the seminar and to agree next steps following the seminar.

Duration: 1 hour.

Session 2: Overview by Seminar Chair (Jon Snow)

Key Topics : Seminar content - what will be covered/timetable.
Style of delivery - participative.
Each shadow minister to introduce themselves, outline responsibilities and state their personal learning objectives for the seminars identifying any additional areas which they would wish to cover.

Description: Another important foundation element for the seminar aimed at clarifying objectives, content and ensuring that ministers take ownership of the seminar. An "ice-breaker" item might be included to remove any tension and build informality.

Duration: 1 hour.

Session 3: A New System of Devolved Government for Northern Ireland led by Political Scientist plus Official(s)

Key Topics: A brief recap of the current system identifying the key facets of the current administration and the foundations which will be carried forward to build the new administration. What does the Belfast Agreement and the Northern Ireland Act 1998 say about the operation of the new devolved institutions:

- the role of the First and Deputy First Ministers;
- the role of the Executive Committee;
- the responsibilities and duties of Departmental Ministers;
- the role of the Assembly.

Description: This session will aim to clear-up any myths or misunderstandings surrounding the current system of administration and the statutory requirements for the new system. It will provide a factual base for the remainder of the seminar by describing the current model (which will then be reviewed in detail) and the essential elements of the new model. The political scientist will lead the presentation but will also need support from appropriate expert officials.

Duration: 1 hour.

Session 4: Being a Minister led by Paul Murphy MP

Key Topics: Personal experiences - challenges; time pressures; balancing departmental, constituency, parliamentary and party responsibilities.

Duration: Working with the system:

- translating political objectives into government policy;
- working with the department;
- remaining accessible to public opinion;
- working with ministerial colleagues;
- working with parliament.

Description: Session 4 focuses the seminar on the element of a being a departmental minister operating within the current model. The aim will be to draw out best practice from the current model and those aspects which should be carried forward to the new model. This provides a further opportunity to dispel any myths about ministers being hostage to their department and to allow the participants to place on the table any issues or concerns about being a minister which can be revisited later.

Duration: 1 to 2 hours.

Session 5: Representation and consultation led by Nigel Warner

Key Topics: Working with political interest groups.

Working with specialists.

Description: Constituency/ Party work v Ministerial responsibilities.

Keeping in touch with the Party.

The lobbying process - how to handle it - do's and don'ts.

Keeping in touch with back bench opinion.

Description: Session 5 builds on Session 4 by completing the picture of "Being a Minister". It focuses on the political side of ministerial life and at this point there might be merit in briefly introducing the Ministerial Code which will be covered in detail during Session 10.

Duration: 2 to 4 hours.

Duration: 1 hour.

Session 6: Departmental relationships between the Minister and his/her senior colleagues a casebook study of the DHSS led by Clive Gowdy plus a tutor from the Civil Service College

Key Topics: The role of the Permanent Secretary and senior officials.
How the DHSS works - strategic management plans, expenditure priorities, managing the Department and its NDPB's.
Statutory responsibilities and discretionary responsibilities.
The policy development process - a good practice case study.

Duration: The briefing process - what it comprises and how it works.
Exercise of Departmental functions by Northern Ireland Ministers.

Session 6: Private The role of the Accounting Officer.
The role of the Civil Service.

Key Topics: The role of Special Advisers.
The presentation of policy.

Duration: - office structure and roles:

Description: Session 6 widens the discussion to consider departmental management in the round exploring the relationship between the minister and the department at the strategic level. It is suggested that a tutor from the Civil service College should deliver a case study built around a policy development example which might be delivered via a role

playing exercise. One possibility for the case study might be the department gearing up to respond to a parliamentary select committee report following this through to the development of legislation.

Duration: 2 to 4 hours.

Session 7: Personal reflections on managing the DHSS by John McFall MP plus a tutor from the Civil Service College

Key Topics: Personal experiences - tips for managing the system.

Description: Session 7 is intended to build on Session 6, departmental management, by providing a political slant to the discussion from John McFall (Mr McFall will need to be present during Session 6). This can then conclude with a panel discussion, comprising Mr Gowdy, Mr McFall and chaired by the CSC tutor, to engage comments from the participants.

Duration: 1 hour.

Session 8: Private Office Procedures led by Ken Lindsay

Key Topics: How the Minister's Office works - a good practice case study build around a week/month in the life of the Minister's Office:

- office structure and roles;
- diary procedures - getting the balance right between departmental requirements v ministerial personal preferences;
- handling meetings;
- handling visits;
- working with officials;

Description: - working with parliament;
- handling PQ/Minister's cases;
- managing paperwork - handy hints, do's and don'ts.

Description: Session 8 is intended to complete the sessions (6 & 7) on departmental management by looking at the nuts and bolts of running the minister's office from a best practice perspective. It will be mainly factual and interactive in delivery allowing participants to ask questions.

Duration: 2 to 3 hours.

Session 9: Handling the media led by Frank Woods

Key Topics: Working with the media.
The role of the Information Service.
Promoting/defending policy.

Description: Session 9 will be a further nuts and bolts presentation of handling the media from a best practice perspective. It will be mainly factual and interactive in delivery allowing participants to ask questions.

Duration: 1 hour.

Session 10: The Ministerial Code of Practice for Ministers in the New Northern Ireland Assembly led by a Central Secretariat official

Key Topics: The Ministerial Pledge of Office - content and practice.
The Ministerial Code of Conduct and Guidance Procedures - content and practice.
The Seven Principles of Public Life - content and practice.

Description: This will be a lengthy session consisting of a factual presentation of the Ministerial Code of Conduct and Guidance Procedures. It will be interactive in delivery allowing participants to ask questions in order to explore and understand the Code and Guidance Procedures.

Duration: 3 to 4 hours.

Session 11: Being a Minister in the New Northern Ireland Assembly led by Jon Snow

Key Topics: Open discussion on carrying forward the good practice developed by NIO ministers.

Description: Session 11 will pull together Sessions 3 to 10 comparing the present model of departmental administration with the new model. It will reinforce best practice and statutory responsibilities ending with revisiting the key information points from the previous sessions.

Duration: 2 hours.

Session 12: The Executive Committee, the Department(s) and the Assembly led by an official(s) from Central Secretariat

Key Topics:

The Executive Committee:

- role of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister;
- functions of the Executive Committee - statutory functions,
- organisation of meetings, conducting business;

Northern Ireland Ministers and the Executive Committee;

The Assembly:

- relationships and accountability;

- Session 12: The role of the Minister and the Department
- ministerial statements and other announcements;
 - working with Assembly committees - their role, statutory responsibilities, legislative role, the Department/Committee interface;
 - handling legislation;
 - financial Acts of the Assembly;
 - Assembly office support.

Description: Session 12 will move the focus of the seminar outwards from the role of the minister and the department to present a detailed overview of how the department and the minister fits with the associated elements of the devolved administration i.e. the Executive Committee, the office of the First and Deputy First Ministers and the Assembly.

Duration: 3 to 4 hours.

Session 13: Working with External Institutions led by Central Secretariat officials

Key Topics: Operating procedures for the North/South Ministerial Council.
Operating procedures for the British-Irish Council.
[the British-Irish Intergovernmental machinery.]
Concordat procedures with Whitehall Departments.
Operating procedures for European Union business.

Description: Session 13 builds on the previous session by continuing to widen the focus of the seminar outwards from the role of the devolved Northern Ireland administration to present a detailed overview of how the administration and the minister fits with the associated external institutions.

Duration: 3 hours.

Session 14: The Programme for Government led by Political Scientist with input from Central Secretariat and DFP officials

- Key Topics: What the Northern Ireland Act 1998 says about the Programme for Government.
- Presentation and discussion of examples of how other models of voluntary coalition operate.
- Basic requirements of the Programme for Government:
- a strategic approach;
 - setting the budget;
 - identifying expenditure priorities;
 - implementation, monitoring and review.
- The role of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister.
- The role of the Assembly.
- Some examples of what the Programme for Government might look like.
- Description: Session 14 moves the seminar into the area of the first major policy issue which the Executive Committee will need to address i.e. The Programme for Government. By this stage the ministers will have an awareness and knowledge of how the machinery of government will operate and against this background begin to consider the development of the Programme for Government. It is suggested that this session (which will be no more than a starting point) should be led by a political scientist presenting possible models of how the Programme might be formulated, for example, the Swiss, Israeli and Republic of Ireland models of how voluntary coalitions in those States prepare Programmes might be looked at. Input will then be required from the First and Deputy First Ministers, Central Secretariat and DFP officials on reviewing the existing strategy which is largely public expenditure driven. The conclusion of this session will be a

presentation of possible options for the Northern Ireland model of a Programme for Government.

Duration: 3 to 4 hours.

Session 15: Conclusion led by Jon Snow with input from the First and Deputy First Ministers

Key Topics: Review of previous sessions.
Conclusion

Description: Open discussion drawing out the key learning and action points from the previous sessions and ending with a final word from the First and Deputy First Ministers.

Duration: 1 hour.

Jackie - the contact at
Celebrity Speakers is Dave
Daniels. The fee is £5K for
describing a role. Dave's
number is 01753 74 7400 -
he's a nice bloke, very chatty!
Good luck with the negotiations! Jon

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Public Relations

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MESSAGE

Low Snow

Jackie - the contact at
 Celebrity Speakers is Dave
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JON SNOW

Jon Snow is the main presenter of Channel 4's award winning flagship news programme, Channel 4 News, which has ITN has produced since its launch in 1982.

Jon joined the presenting team of this highly acclaimed programme in April 1989 and became its full time presenter four months later. He also presents First Edition, the weekly news and current affairs programme aimed at 9-13 year olds co-produced for channel 4 by ITN and Barraclough Carey North and Weekly Planet, a late night topical debate programme broadcast on Channel 4.

Jon Snow joined ITN in 1976 after working in local radio and was made Washington correspondent in 1984. He returned to the UK in 1986, spending the following three years as ITN's Diplomatic Editor during which time he reported on all major stories around the world.

In 1995 Jon received the award for best Male presenter from the Royal Television Society at their Programme and Technology Awards. He also won numerous awards for his reporting over the years including the Royal Television Society's 1979 News Feature Award, for a report from Poland; the Monte Carlo Television Festival's 1979 Golden Nymph top news award for 'Eritrea Air Attack'; and the 1980 RTS TV Journalist of the year Award for his coverage of Afghanistan, Iran and the Middle East.

In 1981 he received the Valiant for Truth Media Award, and in the same year, The Royal Television Society's International Award for a report on a guerrilla camp in El Salvador. In 1982 he won this award for a second time for his report, 'El Salvador: Shoot-out on Polling Day'. He also collected the 1989 RTS Home News Award for ITN's coverage of the Kegworth Air Crash.

Jon, 51, has covered a variety of momentous stories from around the globe for ITN. He reported from Germany when the Berlin Wall was finally pulled down and returned there for the historic elections in March 1990. A month earlier he had provided live coverage from South Africa when Nelson Mandela walked to freedom. Other important stories include the American Shuttle disaster, the Pope's tour of Poland in 1983 and Falklands reports dispatched from Chile.

As presenter of Channel 4 News, Jon Snow has anchored the programme from wherever major world events occur: from South Africa during the country's first democratic elections, from Washington at the Israeli-Palestinian peace signing, from Hong Kong at the time of the handover to China. He also regularly presents 'special' programmes on Channel 4 including Midnight Specials - earlier this year he fronted a three hour marathon from Washington on the night President Clinton gave his State of the Union address amidst allegations of sexual misconduct; debates on 'Back to Basics', the problem of race relations and the Northern Ireland troubles. Jon was also the main presenter of ITN's 1992 General Election Night Programme.

In addition to presenting ITN's programmes on Channel 4, Jon is Chairman of the New Horizon Youth Centre and Deputy Chairman of the Media Trust.



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