



FROM: BILL JEFFREY
Political Director
3 March 1999
BJ/MR/709

DM
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MR SEMPLE

cc See distribution list below

FIRST MINISTER'S OFFICE: DISCUSSION WITH PROFESSOR PAUL BEW

In the course of a discussion with Professor Paul Bew on Monday evening, he asked me informally what the prospects were of adding a further person to the First Minister's Office.

2. There was, he said, someone based in England but of Northern Ireland origin who was likely to become available to join the Trimble office, and who would greatly improve its effectiveness. Bew was unable to tell me who this was (he assured me it was not David Montgomery!) because of the person's current employment. The implication was that they would be sufficiently distinguished to be yet another chief of staff. He realised that if Trimble was to get an extra body Mallon would need to do so as well. But his doubts about the effectiveness of the two Offices, particularly in relating to each other, (which he sensed we shared) were such that it would be money well spent.

3. I reacted with conventional caution. The matter was for you rather than me. I knew there were concerns about the number of political appointments, not least because of the implications for the expectations of the other Ministers when the Executive was formed. And so on. But Bew was quite persistent, and I wondered (though he did not say so) if he was making a first and tentative approach on Trimble's behalf. I doubt if I need go back to him, but he may well come back to me, and it would be helpful to know if there is anything you would particularly want me to say, or bear in mind.

4. I should add that Bew went on to say - slightly inconsistently, I suppose - that he thought Lavery was growing in authority and in Trimble's confidence.

When I remarked that, Lavery apart, I could see his point about the weakness of the Trimble team, he expressed warm personal admiration of both Gudgin and Morgan, but made it clear that he thought each of them was the wrong person in the wrong place at the wrong time, and that they were ill-suited to the politically exposed situations in which they were currently being put. I was tempted to ask him - but didn't - whether he had ever said so to David Trimble.

(Signed)

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**FROM: JOHN SEMPLE
3 MARCH 1999**

**cc Mr Pilling
Mr Bell
Mr Stephens**

MR JEFFREY

**FIRST MINISTER'S OFFICE:
DISCUSSION WITH PROFESSOR PAUL BEW**

1. Many thanks for informing me about your discussion with Paul Bew.
2. You were right to be cautious about the prospect of adding another political adviser to the First Minister's team on two grounds.
3. Firstly, the existing arrangements give the UUP and SDLP 6 advisers each (3 each at the Centre) while the DUP and Sinn Fein will each have 2. The existing arrangements could well produce an adverse reaction from DUP and Sinn Fein. To expand the UUP/SDLP quota further would inevitably lead to demands for an enhanced quota for DUP and Sinn Fein. (As a matter of information, Austen Morgan is a consultant not a special adviser and is on a fixed sum contract.)
4. Secondly, the arrangements for special advisers are very sensitive in relation to the devolved institutions in Scotland and Wales. The Secretary of State sought and secured the Prime Minister's agreement



to the number of special advisers for the Northern Ireland Executive (16) and this figure has now been specified in a Prerogative Order signed by the Secretary of State. I think Sir Richard Wilson would be seriously exercised if we move to increase our number still further and his attitude would clearly influence the PM.

5. There is, however, a solution post devolution. The UUP will have three Ministerial positions and be entitled to employ 3 more advisers. The new adviser mentioned by Paul Bew could either be attached to a UUP Minister or, alternatively, one of David Trimble's existing advisers could go to a UUP Minister, thus creating a vacancy with David Trimble at the Centre.
6. I hope this is helpful. Please have a word if you need more detail.

JOHN SEMPLE