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FROM JONATHAN STEPHENS  
PS/SECRETARY OF STATE  
23 SEPTEMBER 1993

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- cc: PS/Secretary of State (L&B) - B
- PS/Mr Atkins (L,DED&DOE) - B/T
- PS/Sir John Wheeler (L,B&DFP) - B/T
- PS/Michael Ancram (L,B&DENI) - B/T
- PS/Lord Arran (L,DANI&DHSS) - B/T
- PS/PUS (L&B) - B
- PS/Mr Fell - B
- NI Perm Secs - T
- Mr Legge - B
- Mr Thomas - B
- Mr Bell - B
- Mr Lyon - B
- Mr Steele - B
- Mr Watkins - B
- Mr Williams - B
- Mr Wood (L&B) - B
- NIO Grade 5s - B
- Mr Maxwell - B
- Mr Quinn - B
- Mr Caine - B

MR BELL - B

SECRETARY OF STATE'S SPEECHES

The Secretary of State has a significant number of major speeches to deliver over the coming two months. The full programme to the end of November, omitting minor speeches, is attached.

2. Speeches can be difficult to draft and require considerable investment of time and effort from officials - as well as the Secretary of State. With that in mind, the purpose of this minute is to ensure that the speech programme as a whole is rounded and co-ordinated, and individual drafts are well prepared and reflect the Secretary of State's own ideas. Therefore, although it is addressed to you (for reasons I shall explain later), I hope it will be helpful to anyone tasked to prepare a speech for the Secretary of State.

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Outlines

3. For the major speeches in the attached programme, I should be grateful if an outline is submitted well in advance, to the deadline set in the attached programme. This is to give the Secretary of State an opportunity to focus at an early stage on the speech and to give officials a steer as to the sort of approach and subjects he wants to cover. This should reduce the risk that officials will invest time in drafting a speech, which does not in fact reflect the approach the Secretary of State wants to take. The submission with the outline should contain advice on the nature of the occasion and the audience, so as to give the Secretary of State an idea of what will be expected.

4. The deadlines set in the attached programme attempt to give the Secretary of State at least a weekend to consider the outline of the speech, and a further weekend to consider the final draft. Experience shows that this is the sort of time required, so I should be grateful for colleagues' co-operation in keeping to deadlines. In particular, I should be grateful if SIL and CFPD would submit outlines for the speeches on 13 and 14 October, by 28 September. (Extra time is required because of the party conference and because three major speeches come close together.)

Hints

5. I am conscious that, while some officials will regularly write speeches for the Secretary of State, others will do so only rarely. The attached "hints" are intended to provide a helpful guide to those who come to the task relatively rarely.

6. A speech by the Secretary of State on any subject is an important and powerful opportunity to get a message across with authority. However familiar the subject may be to our ears, for any audience the Secretary of State addresses, it will be perhaps the only occasion on which many hear him speak in person.

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7. His speeches, and accompanying media coverage of them, are a very important part of the Government's overall presentation effort. They will therefore inevitably require a significant investment of time by the head of the lead division and, even if he or she does not draft the speech personally, the head of the division will want to take a close personal interest.

Co-ordination

SIGNED: Sarah Penick

8. A number of the speeches in the attached programme have no obvious identified subject as yet. Lead officials have already been identified in commissioning minutes but, on the attached programme, these are marked in square brackets because they might need to change once the subject is decided upon. (But these officials remain responsible until told otherwise). Looking at the programme as a whole, it might be desirable to find occasions for the Secretary of State to speak on:

- economic policy
- security policy (I doubt if the speech on 9 November will lend itself to a serious presentation of policy)
- Northern Ireland and the EC
- why Northern Ireland matters to the rest of the UK (with a GB audience in mind, such as would be provided on 25 November).

9. I should be grateful if you would provide advice on the co-ordination of the speech programme as a whole and, in particular, whether there are gaps in the subjects to be covered and how we might best match subjects to occasions and who would be best placed to draft the resulting speech. It would be helpful if this could be with us by 12 October.

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SECRETARY OF STATE'S MAJOR SPEECH PROGRAMME

| Occasion/Subject  | Lead       | Written | Date          |
|---|------------|---------|---------------|
| <u>Comments</u>   |            |         |               |
| 10. Leadership Challenge  | DFP        |         |               |
| 13 Oct University debating soc.   | SII        |         | 28 Sept 7 Oct |
| "25 years of violence leave little hope of compromise"                          |            |         |               |
| SIGNED: Sarah Denvir  |            |         |               |
| 14 Oct Criminal Justice Conference  | CJPP       |         | 24 Sept 8 Oct |
| pp Oct Commons debate   | CPL        |         | 8 Oct 15 Oct  |
| JONATHAN STEPHENS<br>PS/Secretary of State<br>OAB Ext 6462<br>23 September 1993 | [Mr Wood]  |         | 12 Oct 19 Oct |
| 1 Nov Rotary Club   | [Cent Sec] |         | 20 Oct 27 Oct |
| [no subject]  |            |         |               |
| 2 Nov Bryson House  | BHSP       |         | 21 Oct 28 Oct |
| "Social Policy and Community Care in the 1990s"                                 |            |         |               |
| 9 Nov Regular Commissions Board   | [SPOB]     |         | 28 Oct 4 Nov  |
| "Life in politics"  |            |         |               |
| 15 Nov Royal Belfast Academical Institution                                     | [DENT]     |         | 2 Nov 9 Nov   |
| [no subject]  |            |         |               |
| 18 Nov Conference on Economic Development of the NW Region                      | Cent Sec   |         | 5 Nov 12 Nov  |
| 25 Nov University debating soc.   | [Mr Bell]  |         | 12 Nov 19 Nov |
| [no subject]  |            |         |               |

Comments

10. I should welcome comments from any copy recipients. Speech writing is an art and if others have further hints or suggestions, I should be happy to incorporate them in a revised version.

13 Oct University debating soc. "25 years of violence leave little hope of compromise"

SIGNED: Sarah Denvir

14 Oct Criminal Justice Conference

pp Oct Commons debate

JONATHAN STEPHENS  
PS/Secretary of State  
OAB Ext 6462  
23 September 1993

[Mr Wood] 12 Oct 19 Oct

1 Nov Rotary Club [no subject] [Cent Sec] 20 Oct 27 Oct

2 Nov Bryson House "Social Policy and Community Care in the 1990s" BHSP 21 Oct 28 Oct

9 Nov Regular Commissions Board "Life in politics" [SPOB] 28 Oct 4 Nov

15 Nov Royal Belfast Academical Institution [no subject] [DENT] 2 Nov 9 Nov

18 Nov Conference on Economic Development of the NW Region Cent Sec 5 Nov 12 Nov

25 Nov University debating soc. [no subject] [Mr Bell] 12 Nov 19 Nov

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SECRETARY OF STATE'S MAJOR SPEECH PROGRAMME

| <u>Date</u> | <u>Occasion/Subject</u>  | <u>Lead dept/divn</u> | <u>Outline by</u> | <u>Final version by</u> |
|-------------|--|-----------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| 11 Oct      | Leadership Challenge<br>"Overview of Government policy"                            | DFP                   | Already cleared   | 6 Oct                   |
| 13 Oct      | University debating soc.<br>"25 years of violence leave little hope of compromise" | SIL                   | 28 Sept           | 7 Oct                   |
| 14 Oct      | Criminal Justice Conference  | CJPD                  | 28 Sept           | 8 Oct                   |
| 22 Oct      | Commons debate   | CPL                   | 8 Oct             | 15 Oct                  |
| 24 Oct      | Thomson newspapers' annual conference<br>[no subject]                              | [Mr Wood]             | 12 Oct            | 19 Oct                  |
| 1 Nov       | Rotary Club<br>[no subject]  | [Cent Sec]            | 20 Oct            | 27 Oct                  |
| 2 Nov       | Bryson House<br>"Social Policy and Community Care in the 1990s"                    | DHSS                  | 21 Oct            | 28 Oct                  |
| 9 Nov       | Regular Commissions Board<br>"Life in politics"                                    | [SPOB]                | 28 Oct            | 4 Nov                   |
| 15 Nov      | Royal Belfast Academical Institution<br>[no subject]                               | [DENI]                | 2 Nov             | 9 Nov                   |
| 19 Nov      | Conference on Economic Development of the NW Region                                | Cent Sec              | 5 Nov             | 12 Nov                  |
| 25 Nov      | University debating soc.<br>[no subject]   | [Mr Bell]             | 12 Nov            | 19 Nov                  |

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## HINTS FOR GOOD SPEECHES

1. Find out about the occasion - either direct or through Private Office.
- How long should the speech be?
  - Will anyone else be speaking? If so, what subjects will they cover? (For example, if the GOC, Chief Constable and Secretary of State are all addressing the same conference, they should not cover the same ground.)
  - Is it a special occasion, eg a 10th Anniversary?
  - What do the organisers expect? A lightweight after-dinner speech or a serious lecture?
2. Identify the audience.
- How much do they know of the subject? Are they world-class experts or newcomers?
  - What will they be expecting?
  - Is there an audience outside the conference/meeting etc. to be addressed? If so, how? Will there be a press release?
3. Know the speaker.
- What has the Secretary of State said before on the subject?
  - Are there key phrases or expressions he uses regularly?
  - Will he be familiar with the subject matter?

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4. Submit an outline to the Secretary of State. This should:

- advise on the nature of the occasion and the audience (ie. answer the questions above);
- offer a clear framework for the speech, no more than 2 pages long, suggesting the main topics to be covered and how they should be approached;
- consider whether a press release is required.

5. Draft a final version of the speech.

- Follow a clear structure. For longer speeches, set it out at the beginning so the audience knows what to expect.
- Use a consistent style. You may need contributions from others, but these need careful editing to ensure the speech reads coherently.

6. Use short sentences: complicated phrases are difficult to read.

- Keep paragraphs short (no more than 7 or 8 lines): it's easy to lose your place in larger blocks of unbroken text.
- Generally use the first person ('I think ...', 'I believe ...' or for the Government as a whole, 'we are committed ...') but for formal pronouncements, 'The Government's policy ...'. Always avoid the impersonal third person, 'it is considered that ...'
- Use clear, simple and direct language. Wherever possible, give specific examples of general points eg projects that receive funding, the most recent security force successes etc.

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- Avoid jargon or initials, unless they are universally understood. Don't ask the Secretary of State to read out technical terms, which neither he nor his audience are likely to understand.
  - Get the opening courtesies right eg 'Your Grace, Lord Mayor, members of the Governing Body, Ladies and Gentlemen ...' Are there are other courtesies to be observed? Eg a tribute to the local MP?
  - Pay particular attention to the opening and the ending. The opening should encourage the audience to listen to the rest of the speech. The ending should be positive and upbeat, leaving a clear message with the audience. But avoid purple prose, which will be seen through.
  - Avoid jokes or personal metaphors, unless you know the Secretary of State's style well: he is happy to add his own.
6. Read it through as if you were reading it out!