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SECRET FILE : 15.3.99

John Semple rang to say he was unsure of the Training for Ministers action proposed by Jackie Johnston and covered by my minute dated 11 March 1999. He thought that it was perhaps too prescriptive and it should be left to Ministers to establish their own needs. He was not against some preparatory work being done & would speak to David Ferguson & Jackie Johnston.

With regards to the Chair & Tom Snow he was totally against the cost (an outrageous sum) & would offer to chair the event, if one took place, himself. He did feel that SoFS had dropped the idea of Training for Ministers due to the changing political position.

A. B. B.
15/3/99

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From: Alan Barr
Acting Director
Transition Programme
☎ 26409

cc Mr McCusker
Mr Ferguson
Mr Maccabe
Mr Cosgrave
Mr Johnston

Date: 11 March 1999

To: PS/Mr Semple

**PROPOSED TRAINING SEMINARS FOR POTENTIAL
NORTHERN IRELAND MINISTERS**

Issue: Agreeing the way forward for further development of the proposed training seminars for potential ministers, following Jackie Johnston's original paper.

Timing: Extremely urgent. Reply required by Tuesday 16 March 1999.

Recommendation: That Mr Semple agrees that the Transition Programme Office / Central Secretariat should form a project team to take forward the further development of the seminars as suggested in Mr Johnston's paper and also agrees to money being set aside in the Transition Programme budget to cover these events.

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First Ministers. Some, if not all of these could perhaps join or help the project team.

5. If a decision to move forward on this issue is taken then the urgency to act is paramount. We need to ensure that new Northern Ireland Ministers are not left without help and guidance to fulfil their duties fully and effectively.
6. The cost of these seminars would be in the region of £30,000 to £50,000 depending what Jon Snow charges as chairperson but it should be noted that at least £20,000 up to £40,000 of that would be fees paid to Jon Snow. He is a very expensive celebrity and maybe a decision would be taken to reconsider his use in this programme. I am not aware who came up with the name?
7. Mr Semple is asked:
 - a) to agree that work should move forward as suggested in Jackie Johnston's paper and that a project group is set up.
 - b) to suggest a chairperson for the project board
 - and c) to agree that £50,000 be set in the Transition Programme Budget to cover costs.

ALAN BARR